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President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 45 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields: commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development

Ms. Arjoso (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the United Nations, especially the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for convening this important meeting to commemorate a decade of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994. My country has always been a strong supporter of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action.

This meeting serves as a keystone to maintain the momentum of the International Conference on Population and Development. I am very happy to know that many world leaders, including the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Megawati Soekarnoputri, have reaffirmed the vision that was set forth in the Cairo Programme of Action. The signatures of key leaders in the social, scientific and political sectors will help to maintain the momentum and reaffirm the dedication to achieving the ICPD's goals. I know that all of us are eager to participate in a substantive, action-oriented meeting and to discuss the challenges and obstacles that remain. Its outcome should reflect a frank assessment not only of the progress made in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, but also of the Millennium Development Goals strategies, which, in my view, have strong linkages to reproductive and family planning goals.

I would now like to share our experiences in the efforts that have been made by the Indonesian Government in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. The details of my full report are presented in the Indonesia country report, copies of which, I believe, are available in this Hall. I shall not dwell too long on the report, but I would highlight some of its salient features.

Since the ICPD in 1994, Indonesia's policies on population have taken a more people- and family-centred approach, with particular attention on poverty alleviation as the central challenge for development efforts. Rather than concentrate solely on demographic objectives, population policies in Indonesia emphasize the importance of human and family development, changing attitudes towards reproduction and the client-centred provision of high-quality family planning information and services to achieve sustained economic growth within the context of sustainable development.

Family planning is an integral part of the country's overall reproductive health agenda and its programmes address the full range of reproductive health dimensions, including safe motherhood. The

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programmes address such critical areas as quality of care in reproductive health care services, the demand-fulfilment approach, the prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, the education of youth regarding reproductive health and family well-being, research and data collection on reproductive health, and the promotion of women's empowerment.

Ten years ago, around 179 heads of State or Government, including from my Government, pledged to improve the quality of life of women and families by providing access to family planning, reproductive health care, education, a clean environment and reproductive rights under our long-term goal to achieve sustainable development. Ten years later, we can say that significant progress has been made in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, a girl born today has better prospects than a girl who was born 10 years ago. School enrolment rates, especially for women, are increasing and life expectancy is on the rise. There has been considerable improvement in the condition and position of women in Indonesia. Women's issues are receiving more attention and have become more visible, including issues pertaining to adolescents and girl children.

However, major obstacles to gender equality, equity and empowerment remain. Currently, the problematic issues include a high maternal mortality, the gender gap in education, especially in intermediate and higher education, domestic violence, trafficking in women and girls, and lack of protection for the rights of employed women, particularly those who work overseas. Indonesia is also beginning to see the end of rapid population growth and its fertility rate is now close to replacement level. The total fertility rate is now 2.6. Infant and maternal mortality rates are declining in most provinces. The latest data indicate that, in 2002, the infant mortality rate in Indonesia was 35 per 1,000 live births, while the maternal mortality rate was 307 per 100,000 live births.

Internal and international migration is becoming an alarming issue, as is its impact on urbanization.

Our family planning programme contributes to substantial progress in decelerating population growth and has brought the fertility rate close to the replacement level. In the area of adolescent reproductive health, we have been successful in integrating related issues into the national development strategy. The main focus of the programme is to provide adolescent girls and boys with reproductive health information and counselling related to gender equality, responsible sexual behaviour, the prevention of unwanted pregnancy through the school system, group empowerment and youth centres.

Efforts to achieve reproductive health goals are challenged by a number of factors, but none is as devastating as the global epidemic of HIV/AIDS. We are seeing alarming increases in the number of infections and projections for the future are troubling.

On international collaboration, Indonesia is one of the founders and continues to support the work of Partners in Population and Development in South-South cooperation. That initiative is considered to be a successful modality among countries of the South and provides an avenue for assistance from the countries of the North. Such cooperation, however, will need to be strengthened by the substantive assistance of related international partners, in particular within the United Nations system, and from international donors.

Much more needs to be done. Nothing demonstrates the urgent need for greater action than the issue of safe motherhood in Indonesia. Today, every 15 minutes a mother is separated from her beloved children and husband. She dies in childbirth or from complications of pregnancy, especially haemorrhaging, infection or sepsis, unsafe abortion, eclampsia, or obstructed labour that requires treatment at a hospital. Over 20 per cent of women die as a result of diseases that are aggravated by pregnancy. That tragedy results in 18,000 deaths every year in Indonesia, leaving a devastating void in families, communities and the entire nation.

Yet, there seems to be a solution. Ten years ago, 179 Governments committed themselves to the ICPD Programme of Action. The ICPD prescribes the steps that will not only save millions of women's lives, but will empower individuals to achieve a better future. Universal access to education and sexual and reproductive health services are the primary goals.

The complex challenge requires comprehensive policy measures to focus on maternal mortality rate reduction. For example, there is a need for policies that focus on health sector involvement in reducing maternal mortality and morbidity. National policies and programmes for reducing maternal mortality are based on the Making Pregnancy Safer initiative of the World Health Organization.

Thus, high on the agenda of national safe motherhood is the guarantee that women have access to family planning services to reduce unwanted pregnancies, improve the overall quality and capacity of the country's health systems, especially at the district level, and strengthen human resources. Some programmes are specifically directed at male involvement in reducing maternal death. Indonesia ensures that all women and adolescent girls have the knowledge and means to prevent HIV infection and that men are supportive partners. Indonesia has also reduced the vulnerability of women and girls by increasing respect for their human rights and by confronting gender discrimination and violence.

In mid-1997, the economic crisis gravely affected Indonesia's ability to carry out its ICPD commitments. The attainment of the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action, as well as those of other United Nations conferences, became increasingly uncertain at that time. However, as the international community is fully aware, the sheer fact of Indonesia's being the world's fourth most populous country was of global concern. Thanks to many donors, including the United Nations Population Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Australian Agency for International Development and other providers of assistance, the adverse impact of the economic crisis, especially in the reproductive and family planning programmes, was mitigated to a certain extent. Indeed, without significant help, those programmes would have been impossible to achieve.

Indonesia regards this as a great learning experience, appreciating how the international community can reaffirm and recommit itself to the ICPD goals.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to reiterate once again that the ICPD Programme of Action is not up for renegotiation until the year 2015. There is no reason to slow down the implementation of the ICPD, since to do so would seriously impact our social and economic development and our achievement of sustainable development. We can modify our strategies by implementing more coordinated, effective and efficient intervention to achieve the ICPD goals.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that, since the theme of Cairo strongly underlined the linkages between population concerns and sustained economic growth and sustainable development, it is important that a special session to commemorate the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference 10 years down the road concentrate on regenerating the momentum of the Cairo Conference at this historical period, while our world is being propelled into the new millennium.

Mr. Mwenifumbo (Malawi): I would like to associate my delegation with the statement delivered by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on presiding over this important commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Our appreciation also goes to the United Nations Population Fund for ably organizing all the activities, including the very enlightening round table discussions on the issue at hand.

The Government of Malawi attaches great importance to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD. For Malawi, the Programme of Action presents a comprehensive basis for national and international action on population issues. It is in that respect that we welcome wholeheartedly this opportunity to take stock of the achievements and future challenges in terms of population and development.

My Government has been preoccupied with initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life and living standards of our people. We have therefore aligned ourselves with all international and regional conventions and declarations on population and sustainable development, which place critical focus on sustainable socio-economic development.

Mr. Baali (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Malawi's population is currently estimated at about 12 million and is growing at an average annual rate of 1.9 per cent, according to the 1998 population and housing census. About 3.5 per cent of its population live in poverty. The country has made efforts to reduce poverty levels, allocating a significant percentage of its budget to social sectors.

On the population front, Malawi has formulated and adopted a national population policy, the

implementation of which is in progress. A poverty reduction strategy has also been formulated as one fundamental aspect of achieving sustainable socio-economic development in the country. Further, a policy on gender and development has been adopted. Following the adoption of the policy, some discriminatory legislation and practices against women have been addressed. In addition, some reproductive health concerns and the special problems of the girl child have been raised for further action.

In recent years, the Malawi Government has increased its collaboration with non-governmental organizations and civil society in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population-related programmes, policies and guidelines. We have seen more integration of population issues into development planning and increased advocacy and information, education and communication at all levels, including the media. Efforts to decentralize the national population policy have been stepped up through work with districts and the grassroots, especially in the areas of reproductive health services, gender, education in primary and secondary schools, works and maintenance, environment, water and sanitation.

The contraceptive prevalence rate is now estimated at 26 per cent. That has contributed to a decline in the total fertility rate from 6.7 in 1992 to the current level of 6.3. The maternal mortality rate now stands at 1,120 per 100,000 live births, up from 620 per 100,000 live births in 1992. Thus, it would have been easier to achieve the Millennium Development Goal target at the 1992 levels. The challenge of achieving the objective of maternal mortality rate reduction has nearly doubled in the case of Malawi.

Among other elements, the delinking of HIV/AIDS from reproductive health, the attrition of student nurses, and nurses leaving the country for greener pastures in the Western countries — especially the United Kingdom — are big challenges that have contributed to the worsening scenario. To respond to the attrition problem, the Government, through the Ministry of Health, has introduced a crash programme whereby nurses are trained for six months and then sent to hospitals. They are not fully qualified and mothers may not get top-quality services.

The child mortality rate now stands at 189 per 1,000 live births, down from 234 per 1,000 live births in 1992. The infant mortality rate is now at 104 per 1,000 live births, down from 134 per 1,000 in 1992.

Malawi remains greatly challenged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS has negatively impacted mortality rates, especially for the adult age groups, as demonstrated by a worsening maternal mortality rate, thereby leading to reduced life expectancy at birth from 43 years in 1996 to 39 years in 2000. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate for the 15-49 age group is estimated at 16 per cent nationally. In general, some progress has been made. However, we still have a lot of ground to cover to reach the goals of the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals.

In the remaining 10 years of the Programme of Action, Malawi will redouble its efforts on the reduction of poverty, the HIV/AIDS burden, and infant and maternal mortality rates. Other critical areas of focus include the strengthening of adolescent reproductive health services and the intensification of family planning and safe motherhood interventions. We strongly believe that the provision of universal access to quality education, especially for girls, presents a step in the right direction towards achieving the goals of the Programme of Action. Malawi will continue to apply gender mainstreaming as a strategy in all population-related interventions.

As a developing country, we remain challenged by the question of resources for the full implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as the full integration of population issues into the poverty reduction strategy. We also need to address the cultural and traditional practices that impact negatively on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, gender issues, employment, wealth distribution and overall socio-economic development. It is clear that the many complex and challenging issues of population cannot be addressed by Governments alone. Therefore, Malawi respectfully calls upon the development partners to strengthen their technical and financial assistance to our nations as we attempt to implement the recommendations of the ICPD and the Programme of Action. The worsening indicators, which place most of our countries far from achieving the Millennium Development Goals, also call for increased resources from our development partners towards the implementation of the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

At the regional level, Malawi is the current chair of the Southern African Forum for Population and Development (SAFPAD). SAFPAD was formed in 1996 as a platform for Government officials in the Southern African Development Community and Madagascar to consider population and development issues of interest and priority to member States. Through SAFPAD, some progress has been made at the regional level. The purpose of the establishment of that forum was to monitor progress in the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action, as well as of resolutions adopted at the regional level. There has been significant progress made on the issues of population and development, especially in the organization of the 1994 programme of work of the ICPD, among others.

All countries in the forum have now formulated and adopted national population policies and their implementation is in progress. They have developed poverty reduction strategies as a fundamental aspect of achieving sustainable social and economic development in their countries. Member States have developed policies on gender and development and reviewed discriminatory policies and legislation against women, programmes for the positive imaging of the girl child, and educational policies to allow girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy to continue their education.

However, the indicators of most of our countries are far from achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the ICPD. Extra efforts among ourselves and the continued commitment of our development partners in financial and technical support are called for.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to appeal for continued commitment to the major population challenges facing our respective countries. Malawi is also ready to continue to share its experience with partners at the regional and international levels. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals requires serious commitments on the part of the Government and its development partners in allocating adequate resources and addressing the resource gaps, as well as in developing programmes and strategies that will assist in the attainment of the Goals.

As far as the current status of the Millennium Development Goals is concerned in the case of Malawi and SAFPAD, only two — access to potable water and reducing under-five mortality — can be conceived as achievable with minimum changes in policy and resource allocation. Reducing maternal mortality and eliminating poverty are the most difficult Millennium Development Goals to achieve and require special attention and resource allocation. The slow pace of fostering behavioural change is also making the immediate reduction in HIV infection rates difficult to attain. In general, the other five Millennium Development Goals are achievable only with radical changes in policies, attitudes and mindsets, and political and technical commitment.

Mr. Bunheng (Cambodia): It gives me great pleasure to join previous speakers in commemorating the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. It is indeed our honour to inform this body that Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, on behalf of the people and Royal Government of Cambodia, has proclaimed his full support for the world leaders' statement in support of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

It is interesting to contemplate that it was only 10 years ago that the ICPD called on the international community to adopt a new approach to link population action with human development, women's empowerment, gender equality and the needs and rights of individuals, including young people. The ICPD for the first time grounded family planning, once the main focus of population policies and programmes, within a broader framework of reproductive health and rights, including sexual health. With the assistance of the United Nations and civil society, Cambodia has embraced that message and incorporated it into national policies and planning, addressing those issues across a broad front.

HIV/AIDS is perhaps one of the most talked-about aspects of Cambodia's reaction to the ICPD agenda, with HIV seroprevalence among Cambodian adults having dropped from 3.3 per cent in 1997 to 2.6 per cent in 2002, resulting in Cambodia's being one of only three countries in the world to reverse the HIV infection rate. The National AIDS Authority has played a key coordinating role in the government response to the epidemic, while the Ministry of Health has been in charge of monitoring trends in the epidemic and of putting into practice programmes for the prevention of new infections and the care of those already affected.

On other elements of the ICPD agenda, I believe that Cambodia has made solid gains. For the first time in 36 years, Cambodia organized a national census in 1998, a magnificent achievement by the Ministry of Planning. On the basis of the 1998 data, the Government has been able to organize a Cambodian demographic and health survey, a second socio-economic development plan, a poverty reduction strategy and, most recently, a national population policy. The national population policy was launched by the Prime Minister earlier this year and provided recommendations for further actions in the 10 priority population areas, including clear links between high fertility and high population growth and poverty.

Since 1994, the Government has been increasing the number of legislative and administrative measures to protect the rights of girls and women, starting with a national birth spacing policy in 1994, a law on the suppression of kidnapping, trafficking, sale and exploitation of human beings in 1996, a labour law in 1997, and a law on abortion in 1997, and has submitted a draft law against domestic violence that we hope to reintroduce to the National Assembly this year. The establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1996 is one of our major achievements. That Ministry has been actively and effectively pursuing a five-year strategy from 2001, gradually achieving ICPD aims.

In the years after 1994, the Ministry of Health issued guidelines on male and female sterilization and national safe motherhood policy and strategies. In November 2002, the Ministry of Health published the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2003-2007, which will target infant and maternal mortality rates as a priority and seeks to empower all people to take decisions based on informed choices. Now, the Government has integrated reproductive health into health care at the level of health centres. All Government health centres throughout the country offer birthing facilities to attempt to meet the sorely pressing need for birthing space. The training and use of midwives and the use of emergency obstetric care are being steadily increased, including in remote areas.

Given the large proportion of young people in the country, the adolescents and young people of Cambodia have been receiving more attention. The Government has been particularly encouraging towards and supportive of any organization that reaches out to the young, particularly to broaden and deepen their education on reproductive health and on the prevention of new infections of HIV/AIDS. We give particular credit to the European Union/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) initiative that has worked through international and Cambodian non-governmental organizations to reach young people in both urban and rural areas.

All this and more shows the distance that Cambodia has come since 1994. We could not have achieved so much on our own. Partnerships have been essential to our strategy. We were very fortunate that UNFPA opened an office in Phnom Penh in 1994 and has provided Cambodia with much guidance and technical assistance in those areas, as have other United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, to name but a few. Other bilateral donors, international agencies and civil society have also made very important contributions. Without such partnership, our path towards the ICPD goals would have been rockier indeed.

But the goals have not yet been achieved. We are still far short of reaching the ICPD targets and we still lack resources to achieve all that we would like. I would therefore like to finish with an appeal to the international community and civil society to keep the message of ICPD + 10 in mind and to strengthen their partnership in Cambodia so that the important goals will remain achievable within the foreseeable future and do not disappear from sight.

Mr. Ahamed (India): My delegation is pleased to participate in this event to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. We commend the Secretariat for its report on the review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference, prepared for this occasion. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77.

The central theme of the International Conference was to forge a balance among population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The objective of the agreement reached at the Conference was to raise the quality of life and well-being of human beings and to promote human development. The Programme of Action, in our view, rightly emphasized

the need to integrate population concerns fully into development strategies and planning, taking into account the interrelationship of population issues with the goals of poverty eradication, food security, adequate shelter, productive employment and basic services for all.

The rate of population growth over the past decade has been higher in the poorer nations of the world, with four out of every five persons living in the less developed regions in 2004, and also higher within the poorer and disadvantaged sections of society. The emphasis on sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the Programme of Action therefore becomes extremely relevant.

India formulated a national family planning programme as early as 1952, with the objective of stabilizing the population at a level consistent with the requirements of growth of the national economy. The technological advances and improved quality and coverage of health care resulted in a rapid fall in the crude death rate in India from 25 per 1,000 in 1951-61 to 10 in 1991 and to 8 in 2002. In contrast, the reduction in the crude birth rate has been less steep, declining from 41 per 1,000 in 1951-61 to 30 in 1991 and 25 in 2002. As a result, the annual exponential population growth rate was over 2 per cent in the period 1961-1991. But from 1991 to 2001, population growth decelerated to below 2 per cent for the first time in four decades, though not uniformly across the country.

The International Conference has had a profound impact on India's policy related to population stabilization, as agreed and unanimously endorsed by our Parliament. The commitments contained in the Programme of Action find full reflection in our national population policy. India has a strong political commitment to achieving population stabilization goals. A comprehensive population policy, laying down 14 socio-demographic goals and several operational strategies, has been unanimously endorsed by our national Parliament. A national population commission has been established under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. A national population stabilization fund has been constituted, with the Prime Minister as its Chairperson and with an initial corpus of 1 billion rupees or approximately $20 million. The mobilization of resources from the private sector for undertaking several initiatives in the underserved areas, where access to health-care continues to be inadequate, is also envisaged. An empowered action group has been specially set up to design and formulate programmes in terms of both geographic and thematic areas, with a special focus on the needs and themes that require further attention.

Population policies in India are based on the recognition of the right of every woman to decide for herself the number of children she wants and when, while simultaneously acknowledging that male participation is equally critical. We neither evaluate our programmes based on predetermined targets, nor encourage the use of any coercive measures or inducements.

The 2001 census showed that the literacy rate in the last decade has gone up from 64.1 per cent to 75.9 per cent for men and from 39.3 per cent to 54.2 per cent for women. Progress in education has contributed to a reduction in the fertility, morbidity and mortality rates, as well as to the empowerment of women. Education also provides access to information. The linkages among education, expanding markets and income, and the reduction in fertility are significant for countries like ours.

The Millennium Development Goals aimed at reducing global poverty and hunger by half by 2015. The Secretary-General has pointed out that, despite some setbacks in certain countries, progress has been made in reducing poverty rates, though not in reducing the absolute number of poor persons. Despite sustained increases in the food supply globally, the number of undernourished people has grown since 1995 as food insecurity increased in many of the poorest countries.

India has made substantial progress on growth and poverty reduction over the past decade. Progress has also been made in improving literacy, enrolment completion, and gender balance in primary education. According to one estimate, with the current trends, India will comfortably achieve its targets in both income and food security. The Government of India is committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. That commitment has been most recently illustrated in the Government of India's budget for the year 2004-2005.

The central theme of the Cairo Conference was to forge a balance among population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The balance was based on the premise that the actions of the Governments of developing countries would be

matched by assistance from the donor community. International assistance and support that was promised to the developing countries has fallen short. The Secretary-General pointed out in his report that, in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action, continued efforts and commitment are needed to mobilize sufficient human and financial resources. On the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, nations of the world — developed and developing — need to reiterate their resolve to achieve the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action. Sustained, continued and enhanced assistance from the international community is needed to help achieve our joint objective.

Mr. Singh (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to address the Assembly today at this special meeting. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, allowed for the creation of a new standard in the level of health and well-being that people have a right to expect and recognized the need to address not only the symptoms and problems related to population and development, but also their root causes — including poverty, abuses of human rights, gender inequality, social and economic inequity, lack of education and employment, and the absence of the principles of good governance.

Over the past 10 years our countries have used that framework as the basis for policy and action, and we have made important progress. In Canada, the ICPD Programme of Action together with other international commitments, such as the Beijing Declaration, have been important catalysts for progress towards gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and in bringing a human rights perspective to population and development efforts, both at home and abroad.

(*spoke in English*)

Despite progress in some areas, maternal morbidity and mortality rates, HIV/AIDS infection, poor sexual and reproductive health and global poverty — particularly among women and in female-headed households — remain unacceptably high in many parts of the world and our collective responses to challenges in areas such as migration have not been adequate.

Perhaps the most significant change in the global landscape since Cairo has been the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The global community is responding to the crisis and in some areas we are beginning to see progress. We have learned that addressing gender inequality and promoting and protecting human rights, including focusing on child protection, are essential for reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and for ensuring the economic and social stability of communities.

Stigma and discrimination continue to be significant barriers to addressing HIV/AIDS. Women — especially poor or marginalized women — continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS in that they are both physiologically, economically and socially more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, which in turn exacerbates their vulnerability. Key to breaking that cycle is the need to examine and challenge the notion of the "ABC" approach to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, which does not necessarily meet the urgent need of women to enjoy or exercise their rights or empower them with the tools to protect themselves from HIV and other infections. Similarly, we must ensure that campaigns, such as the World Health Organization's 3 by 5 Initiative, include a gender perspective and that delivery reaches and is reflective of the needs of all those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Addressing the linkages between sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS and ensuring coordinated and integrated efforts in those areas will make a major contribution to promoting and protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights and to combating HIV/AIDS. The work of key United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Population Fund, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other sponsoring organizations, has laid a solid foundation on which to build partnerships and move this agenda forward.

In the context of changing age structures, the largest generation of youth ever is presently making its transition to adulthood. In 1994, we recognized the special needs of young people and outlined in the ICPD Programme of Action those areas which evidence suggests are most likely to be effective in maintaining and protecting the health of young people, such as access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health care and services, including information and education — all of which recognize the rights of young people. In 2004, we must seize the opportunity and work with youth to address the needs

of this generation if we are to make a significant contribution to meeting our Cairo commitments.

We must also work to address Cairo commitments on migration, including making the option of remaining in one's country viable for all people. While there has been some progress in that area over the past 10 years, issues surrounding remittances, internally displaced persons, refugees and an increasing number of undocumented migrants and international criminal smuggling and trafficking networks — often related to lack of employment opportunities and good governance structures — all underscore the substantial scope of the effort still required to address them. The round table held here in New York earlier this week highlighted the complex and cross-cutting nature of migration, including issues related to human security, human rights, employment, urbanization, health systems, humanitarian aid and development, and social and economic inequity.

Canada strongly supports the continued relevance of the ICPD as a comprehensive, balanced and constructive road map for international cooperation on international migration. In meeting those challenges, the ICPD Programme of Action remains as relevant today, if not more so, than it did in 1994. Canada firmly believes that the ICPD Programme of Action, together with the key actions for its further implementation, should continue to serve as the framework for action in this area.

Looking forward to the next 10 years, we need to be determined and creative in identifying and addressing the barriers to achieving the Cairo goals and commitments. We need to back up our commitments to gender equality with concrete actions that will effect positive changes in the lives of women and men, boys and girls. We need to challenge current thinking on our approaches to HIV/AIDS prevention, and we need to engage adolescents and youth in a meaningful way.

Equally urgent is the need to revisit the commitments to migration that are outlined in chapters IX and X of the Cairo document and to renew our commitments to finding solutions. Canada believes that the Cairo Programme of Action should continue to inform the debates that will take place over the next two years within the context of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) and the 2006 high-level dialogue so that those discussions will consider a broad and integrated view of migration and development issues. We are pleased that the Canadian Commissioner is contributing to GCIM.

Canada considers that implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is essential for implementing the internationally agreed poverty reduction and development goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration and the associated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indeed, sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, human rights, education and the root causes of migration underpin the MDGs agreed at the Millennium Summit, not least of which are the Goals related to environmental sustainability, the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, child mortality, maternal health and reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Without continued significant political and financial commitment by both developed and developing countries to achieving the core commitments of the ICPD Programme of Action, we will not be able to meet the internationally agreed poverty reduction and development goals outlined in the Millennium Development Goals.

We cannot ignore the challenging issue of financing. We must continue to explore options for new mechanisms to generate additional resources to meet the ICPD goals.

Finally, let me turn to the issue of partnerships. Partnerships at the international regional and national level — between Governments, international organizations and all elements of civil society, including youth, indigenous populations and non-governmental organizations — are critical for creating an enabling environment for population and development. Governments alone cannot ensure the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

In this respect, we applaud the efforts of the United Nations system and of our civil society partners, particularly over the past year, to bring together and challenge diverse constituencies to develop joint partnerships for population and development. These include the various round tables and technical meetings organized by the United Nations Population Fund, as well as the innovation and initiative taken by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in launching the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.

Canada will continue to work closely with all partners at the national, regional and international levels to ensure that we successfully meet the goals and objectives set out at Cairo. We recognize that the challenges before us do not have easy solutions, but we commit ourselves to this cooperative effort.

Ms. Taracena Secaira (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): In 1994, Guatemala was one of the 179 countries that participated in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). During the last ten years, Guatemala has advanced in the implementation of the commitments laid down in the Programme of Action, within the framework of the Peace Agreements signed in Guatemala in 1996 and the Constitution of the Republic.

As a result of the regional process of evaluation of the fulfilment of those commitments laid down in the Cairo Programme of Action — a process carried out in a series of meetings held this year in Santiago, Chile, and San Juan, Puerto Rico — Guatemala wishes to express its satisfaction at the achievements that have marked this decade. The ICPD has certainly contributed to the social and human development of all Guatemalans, both male and female. We associate ourselves with the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Conference and congratulate the Office of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on its progress in carrying out the Programme of Action with regard to respect for human rights, education, integral health, environmental protection, the status of women, gender equality and fairness.

In the past few years, Guatemala has worked to mainstream population and development issues in the national agenda, particularly with respect to legislation and public policies in the spheres of social development, health, HIV/AIDS, education, the environment, the complete advancement of women, and other areas. Guatemala's position on those issues has been changing substantially since the end of the internal armed conflict. Democratization processes, the need to overcome the consequences of the struggles that raged for years and plunged the country into confrontations between families, communities and social groups, and that led to the destruction of the traditional unity of the family, increased poverty and forced migration, are all involved in the change.

Within this framework, the conclusion of the Peace Agreements in 1996 has also contributed to the recognition of equal rights for men and women in various areas of social and political life and the participation of women in the development of Guatemalan society, as well as the commitment by the State to eliminate any form of discrimination, de facto or legal, against women.

It is necessary to note the efforts aimed at cooperation with civil society in promoting the initiative for a Social Development and Population Law. This has underscored Guatemala's commitment to implementing the Cairo Programme of Action. Our new law was enacted on the basis of a consensus reached by a multisectoral forum, with the participation of various churches, universities, indigenous peoples, the business sector, the media, women's organizations and other representatives of organized civil society. This law, which is novel to our country, addresses key topics relating to social development in Guatemala and is an example of the progress the country has achieved in this area.

Within this same framework, Guatemala has achieved significant changes in the social sphere based on an equitable and humane approach, particularly with regard to preventive and curative health care for mothers and newborn and for women and men in the rural sectors who have found it very difficult to enjoy the benefits of development. There have been considerable improvements in the equitable access by boys and girls to basic education. Moreover, citizens' participation has been encouraged and the rights and specific needs of women and indigenous peoples have been recognized. Nevertheless, we have not lost sight of the reality — an impoverished population that is ever more vociferous in its demands for the elimination of discrimination, just and equal treatment and access by women to the decision-making hierarchy.

In the years immediately ahead, Guatemala will strive to consolidate the progress that has been made, particularly as mandated by its Social Development Law. Moreover, the country will ensure that the concerns of women are incorporated in all spheres of Guatemala's development, not with a partial vision, or one seen under the heading "women's affairs", but rather one that takes into account the need for women to play a proactive role in the development of their country.

In compliance with the Cairo Programme of Action, Guatemala has embraced a new paradigm that is based on human rights. Guatemala maintains its position against the practice of abortion, in the belief that life begins at the moment of conception, as provided for under article 3 of our Constitution. It follows that any action that endangers life can, obviously, not be countenanced by us. Guatemala concurs with paragraph 8.25 of the Cairo Programme in considering that abortion should not be promoted as a method of family planning. It is thus clear that neither at the Cairo Conference, nor at the meetings or in statements at Santiago and San Juan, have the practices of abortion been promoted. This position is fully in keeping with the feelings and beliefs of the majority of the Guatemalan people.

The Government of Guatemala wishes to confirm its commitment to the Cairo Programme of Action and will continue to comply with it, within the constitutional precepts and the laws existing in our country.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): It is with pride that we look back on the revolutionary step taken 10 years ago by the international community: the adoption of the Cairo Programme of Action.

It was then that our perception of population and demographic issues changed. In Cairo, our heads of State expanded the idea of family planning to include reproductive health and a package of reproductive rights, in particular the right freely to choose contraception and family size. That rights-based approach recentred development on the human being. Members may recall the phrase used at the time: "Let us no longer just count people — let us make people count".

With this new, broader vision of population and development issues, which has shifted the focus of family planning to reproductive rights and health, the lives of millions of women, young people and children have improved. Today, the idea that individuals, women and men alike, should have the right — and the responsibility — to freely choose the size of their families and decide for themselves whether to use contraception, has gained ground. The number of births per woman has decreased overall. Access to health services has clearly improved, and a number of countries have taken very important steps to bring their legislation into line with the Cairo Programme of Action, to promote gender equality and to enhance the role of women.

We are mindful of the fact that much remains to be done in order to guarantee full reproductive rights and reproductive health, including access to reproductive health services by all — men, women and adolescents. It is absolutely unacceptable that over 500,000 women die during childbirth each year. Those are deaths that are preventable. It is our duty to ensure access to information about contraceptives, especially for young people, and to do everything we can to protect women and men from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. In doing so, we must fully take into account and respect the sociocultural environment and the values of the society in question.

Switzerland believes that a connection must be made between universal rights and moral and cultural values, so as to ensure that universal human rights are better observed and that they play their proper part in the daily lives of all.

With respect to the Millennium Declaration, eight development goals for poverty eradication were formulated. Switzerland believes that those Millennium Development Goals are the synthesis of all of the goals set during the world conferences of the 1990s. We must all have the firm conviction that poverty eradication is impossible without improving reproductive rights and reproductive health, as well as gender equality and universal access to education.

Switzerland appreciates the efforts being made in this context by the United Nations and its operational agencies. Here, I would like to pay special tribute to the United Nations Population Fund in implementing the Programme of Action at the national level. The Fund plays a crucial role in areas such as reproductive health, gender equality, family and youth. It has shown remarkable skill, particularly with regard to cultural matters, at sensitive moments, and has proved to be a reliable partner of the developing countries when defending the right of the individual to reproductive health.

We believe that we are on the right track. I assure the Assembly that Switzerland will do everything in its power to help to implement the Cairo Programme of Action.

Mr. Siv (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join with others on this tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), because of our firm commitment to advancing the well-being of women and their families and to upholding the positive values and ideals embraced in the ICPD Programme of Action.

While the Programme of Action is not a perfect document, it has historic importance and reflects the aspirations of the international community. It provides a broad concept of population policy — one that is focused on humanity and the human condition, that respects cultural, religious, and social values, and that firmly condemns Government control and coercion.

As with all of our work in the United Nations, the United States approaches the ICPD Programme of Action in the context of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Those documents commit the world community to protecting the dignity and worth of each human person — a concept at the heart of the ICPD.

In the years since the ICPD, we have seen that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to population. In many countries, today's population trends are positive: longer lifespans, healthier families and greater prosperity. In others, there is a sadder story to tell. Maternal mortality remains a devastating sorrow, undiminished since Cairo. More than 1.1 billion people exist in poverty, living on less than $1 a day. Increasing urbanization in the developing world brings the challenge of providing for some of the world's poorest peoples.

Worst of all, the number of individuals living with HIV has grown from approximately 14 million in 1994 to over 38 million today. The international community is only now beginning to make headway against the ferocity of that disease.

Yet let there be no confusion. The United States is committing substantial resources to meeting these challenges. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) alone spends more than $1.4 billion on international health assistance, exclusive of HIV/AIDS programming. Furthermore, we are rapidly escalating our support for HIV prevention, care and treatment activities. These are carried out through both the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with planned expenditures through 2008 of $15 billion.

The promotion of behaviour change — encouraging abstinence and fidelity — is integral to our fight against HIV/AIDS. Working with parents, we must encourage our young people to make safe and healthy choices. Equally important, we recognize that empowering and protecting women is a critical component of efforts to stop the spread of the disease.

The status of women — and the influence of cultural norms, property rights and economic opportunity on their lives — are all critical factors in reducing their risk of HIV infection.

The United States is the largest single donor of maternal health assistance, including family planning and reproductive health programmes. For these, USAID programming has exceeded $475 million annually over the past 4 years — a $50 million increase in funding since 2000. In recent years, we have increased our maternal and reproductive health assistance to countries in Africa and the Near East.

As we entered this 10-year review process, there was a need for greater clarity about what the ICPD Programme of Action does and does not say on sensitive issues like reproductive health services. The regional review process has been helpful because it has served to allay one of our key concerns, which was that some might be misusing the ICPD to promote abortion.

However, what we have heard over and over in regional reviews is that nations do not believe that the ICPD Programme of Action promotes, endorses, or supports abortion. The United States concurs that nothing in the Programme should be understood to promote, endorse, or support abortion, and, with the understanding that States will not misuse it in that way, we are pleased to continue to offer our support for the ICPD and its Programme of Action.

The United States is advancing the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action on many fronts. Through programmes that support both the education and political participation of women around the world — and that help men appreciate the importance of women's participation — we are contributing to greater gender equity globally.

We support basic education for girls as well as boys in order to reduce poverty, improve health and social well-being, and sustain economic growth.

We are also advancing the position of women in the developing world by promoting entrepreneurship and prosperity with microenterprise programmes. Our Millennium Challenge Account offers new hope for some of the world's poorest countries. We recognize that the participation of women is vital to the success of a country's long-term development strategy.

We encourage increased political participation by women and the strengthening of their role in decision-making processes. We provide support for leadership and advocacy training, educational exchange programmes, and civil society and democracy skills workshops. We have actively supported the great strides made by women in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq in securing their rights under the law. That includes the right to vote, as successfully exercised by the women of Afghanistan last Saturday.

The promotion of gender equality will always be a high priority for the United States. Equally high priorities for us are respect for motherhood, the rights and responsibilities of parents, and the family as the basic and fundamental unit of societies everywhere.

We also wish to highlight one of the ICPD's most significant accomplishments: the crafting of a global consensus on migration that continues to this day. Migration is a global phenomenon. All countries are, to some extent, countries of origin, transit, and destination. America is supporting regional migration dialogues that promote orderly, legal and humane migration policies. Those policies should also uphold international protection for refugees, asylum seekers and victims of trafficking. We believe that these regional approaches are most likely to yield concrete results for all countries.

The ICPD Programme of Action was the first major United Nations document to focus attention on the issue of trafficking in persons. The global community has indeed made substantial progress in that area. President Bush has taken strong action to combat trafficking at home and abroad, urging action through the United Nations and signing legislation domestically. Since 2001, the United States has provided more than $295 million to support anti-trafficking programmes in more than 120 countries.

In sum, there is much to be proud of in what we have accomplished together in the past 10 years, although much remains to be done. The United States looks forward to continuing our partnership in the process of advancing our shared goal of a better life for all.

Mr. Amayo (Kenya): My delegation appreciates the able manner in which Mr. Ping is continuing to steer the deliberations of the work of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. We align ourselves with the statement issued by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In recognition of the intrinsic link between demography and sustainable development and the special challenges it poses for the developing world, our heads of State and Government met in Cairo 10 years ago and came up with a Programme of Action aimed at addressing those issues. The Programme of Action identified key sectors and corresponding goals whose attainment was imperative to sustainable development, namely universal access to education; reproductive health; gender equity and equality; reducing infant, child and maternal mortality; and combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Kenya reaffirms its commitment to the decisions made at Cairo and sees them as the way forward towards addressing population, reproductive and health issues. We hold the view that the Consensus reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) should not be reconsidered or renegotiated. As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the ICPD, it is imperative that we take stock of the progress made and the challenges faced in this arena.

Issues of population and reproductive health remain integral to addressing poverty eradication. This has been exacerbated by hunger and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Unfortunately, developing countries, particularly in Africa, lag behind in indicators identified by the Programme of Action, such as life expectancy. That has been attributed to the socio-economic transformations that have resulted from malaria, tuberculosis and cholera, as well as from the HIV/AIDS pandemic itself.

As noted by the Secretary-General, the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if population-related issues as well as reproductive health issues are not addressed. It is therefore imperative that the ICPD Programme of Action and Millennium Development Goals be addressed simultaneously.

At the national level, the Ministry of Health, the National Council for Population Development and the Family Planning Association of Kenya are working in close collaboration to address these issues as well as formulate policies and implement national population and reproductive health programmes. Poor economic performance over the past few years has been compounded by the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has affected the productive population. The attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will depend on how effectively we deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which, in sub-Saharan Africa, has reversed the economic and social gains of the past decades.

We appreciate the assistance of our development partners and of the United National Global Fund in that regard, but we would caution that a lot more needs to be done. My delegation would like to highlight the need to reach the target 0.7 per cent of gross national product target as official development assistance by developed countries. In that regard, we welcome the announcement by the European Union this morning that it intends to fill the entire reproductive health commodities gap — $75 million — this year.

The President returned to the Chair.

The Kenya Government has implemented various policies aimed at long-term economic stability and development. These include the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2001-2004; Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation; Adolescent Reproductive Health Strategy; Gender Policy; and Youth Policy.

Kenya has also adapted the ICPD Programme of Action domestically, in the form of the National Population for Sustainable Development policy. In addition, the International Conference on Population and Development's reproductive health agenda has been articulated in the National Reproductive Health Strategy. Other measures put in place by the Government include the introduction of free and compulsory primary education and the recognition of the central role played by women in development. Care is being taken to address this particular gender disparity by advocating for the girl child and appointing women to positions of authority.

Let me conclude by stating that we note with satisfaction the overwhelming support expressed at the regional ICPD+10 review meetings and reaffirm our commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and the key actions of the five-year review. We appreciate the continued support of our development partners. However, my delegation would like to urge them to increase financial support in order to ensure stable and predictable achievement of the ICPD goals and the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Sunaga (Japan): I would like to join the other delegations gathered here in celebrating the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

As we all know, the ICPD Programme of Action marked a turning point in international cooperation on population and development. Indeed, it has not only strengthened the commitments and efforts of the international community but is also bringing about a significant change in the way we address population issues, shifting the focus from macroscopic demographic control to a human-centred approach respecting the rights of individuals.

As a result, during the past ten years, many actions have been taken at the international, national and regional levels, and much progress has been made in a number of countries. However, we still have many challenges ahead in order to fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action and achieve its objectives.

The issues with which we are dealing here are extremely important for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. That is why Japan gives the highest priority to assistance in this sector. For instance, more than 20 per cent of Japan's annual grant aid is spent on health, particularly that of mothers and children, and on fighting infectious disease. Japan supports capacity-building for doctors and midwives, the building of health systems and hospitals and the provision of other health-care facilities and medicine. Japan has introduced a maternal and child health handbook in some Asian countries. The handbook is given to pregnant women to enable them to keep their health and medical records, as well as those of their children, until their children reach the age of six. This has greatly contributed, in Japan and several Asian countries, to increased education among expecting mothers, comprehensive care for newborn children and medical exams thereafter.

Japan also attaches particular importance to the basic education of girls. Promotion of girls' education is a key element in the empowerment of women.

Education increases women's participation in decision-making and provides economic opportunities. Japan supports programmes to improve girls' access to education, including the creation of separate washroom facilities in schools and the distribution of school lunches to provide incentives for poor families to send girls to school.

Japan is also committed to gender equality. For example, projects providing support for women account for 11 per cent of Japan's technical assistance and 25 per cent of its grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. In 2003, the Government of Japan organized a symposium on eliminating female genital mutilation in Khartoum, Sudan. That practice is deeply rooted in tradition, and there is, therefore, opposition to its elimination. Nevertheless, it is a practice that infringes not only on women's health but also on women's human rights, and there is no question that it must be brought to an end.

As my delegation has mentioned on many occasions, the Government of Japan promotes human security. Human security means the protection of human lives, livelihood and dignity, and the empowerment of individuals. The principles embodied in this concept are largely incorporated in the ICPD Programme of Action. Having said that, I have to note that population is a sensitive issue that touches on individuals' moral decisions and the cultural and traditional values of each society. Therefore, what is most important in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is partnerships, not only between developed and developing countries, but also among civil society, international organizations and, of course, ordinary people.

Ms. Zbarskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was a powerful impetus to the international community, including to the Russian Federation, for elaborating and implementing comprehensive national policies for resolving demographic problems in a context of sustainable and long-term economic and social development. We are convinced that the implementation of the objectives of the Cairo Conference will make a substantial contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Over the last ten years, in certain key areas of the ICPD Programme of Action, significant progress has been reached. We must recognize the important role played by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in this process. However, progress in attaining the goals of Cairo has been mixed.

We believe, in this connection, that national and international population programmes should be based on an analysis of the real situation in the developing and developed countries and in countries in transition. Of great importance for assessing the implementation of the decisions taken in Cairo was the European Population Forum 2004, held in January. During the Forum, current demographic trends were analysed, as was experience in resolving the pressing problems confronting all countries of the region.

The last decade has been marked, for the Russian Federation, by difficult and complex population processes. For more than ten years now, the main determining factor for demographic development in our country has been de-population, which has been the result of protracted changes in the reproductive behaviour of families and has led to a significant drop in reproductive rates and an increase in mortality rates. As in many European countries and industrially developed countries, the one-child model for families has become the prevalent model in the Russian Federation.

At a time when the birth rate has practically halved the rate for population reproduction, maintaining and safeguarding reproductive health and rights for Russians has become a top priority. In order to implement our national priorities, the Government of the Russian Federation, after the Cairo Conference, has been engaged in actively elaborating an ideology for a State population policy. In 2001, a concept was endorsed for the demographic development of the Russian Federation up until 2015, which formulated the most important areas of the Russian Federation's public policy in the area of population. The main strategic goals seek to improve the health of the population to increase life expectancy, to lower preventable death rates, particularly for working age men, to stimulate the birth rate and strengthen the family through greater prosperity, by improving the quality of life and living standards, social protection for the family, incentives for people to have children and greater educational outreach on population matters.

As a result, there has been a drop in mortality rates for women by approximately one third during the

past decade. There has been a continuing drop in infant mortality and the number of abortions has been cut almost in half. The total birth rate has increased to 130 children per 100 women. The State is trying to meet the needs of the elderly, which is a growing segment of our society — more than 13 per cent of the population are over 65 years of age.

However, when you evaluate the demographic situation as a whole, and particularly the health of Russian citizens, including their reproductive health, we must recognize that the situation is far from ideal, and the steps being taken to improve the situation are not always effective.

Mortality rates are extremely high, particularly among men of working age. Life expectancy is dropping, the overall morbidity rates are on the rise, and despite some reduction, maternal mortality rates remain approximately two to two and a half times higher than in developed countries. In one out of every four cases, the cause of maternal death is abortion. Artificial interruption of pregnancy is still the most prevalent method of family planning in our country.

The rate of contraceptive use over the last 10 years has been virtually unchanged. They are used by about a fifth of all women of child-bearing age. There has been a surge in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The rapid spread of the disease is because of the spread of HIV/AIDS among drug users. Among HIV-infected persons, 80 per cent are young people under 30 year of age. The Government of the Russian Federation, together with international and Russian public organizations and funds, are taking steps to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, primarily among the most vulnerable risk groups, as well as among adolescents and young people. One of the most important areas for this work is in preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission.

An important component in assessing progress made in implementing the goals of the Cairo Conference is a comprehensive analysis of the problem of international migration. The Programme of Action recognizes the positive impact of international migration on the recipient and source countries, as well as on the transit countries. For many reasons, population migration will play a particularly important role in helping to achieve strategically necessary levels of stable demographic development for Russia in future decades. It is through migration that Russia can mitigate the negative effects of depopulation and population ageing in the near future.

At this time when the world is confronting a growing threat of terrorism, obtaining reliable and detailed information about international migration is becoming exceptionally important. One of the major conditions for that is to have uniform standards for statistics relating to international migration. Those standards must become the basis for comprehensive, internationally comparable information for all national statistics offices. We think it is essential to do more work in this area.

In addition to our own efforts, the Government of the Russian Federation attaches great importance to international cooperation in the area of population. For Russia, it is still crucial to have resolute support for our reforms in the sociodemographic sphere. We hope to develop cooperation on those issues, both through our traditional bilateral partners and with our multilateral organizations, including the United Nations system and primarily the United Nations Population Fund.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): "We are gathered here to answer a moral call to action." These were the opening words of Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Norwegian prime minister, in her keynote address to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo 10 years ago. The Cairo Conference answered the call by formulating a Programme of Action that was a milestone in the history of women's rights and an equally important achievement in the field of population and development.

But even more important, in the course of the last 10 years the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), together with its partners in development, has succeeded in making the Cairo Programme a guiding instrument for action. The Programme has become core thinking and practice internationally, and it is a very encouraging sign that every region in the world is reaffirming its commitment to the Programme. This year's State of the World Population Report shows that significant steps have been taken to follow up the Cairo agenda. We would like to take this opportunity to commend Thoraya Obaid for her commitment and leadership, and to say how much we welcome the news of her continuing three more years in office.

In 2000, world leaders committed the global community to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Meeting the ICPD goals is both consistent with and essential to the achievement of the MDGs. We will not reach the MDGs if we fail to safeguard the reproductive rights and services enshrined in the ICPD Programme of Action.

While focusing on 2015, we are gathered here to reaffirm and reinforce our efforts to meet the Cairo commitments. Gender equality and empowering women continues to be an all-encompassing and paramount challenge. The current high global rate of maternal mortality and incidence of women with birth-related injuries and disabilities tells a story of women without security or rights, disempowered and deprived of human dignity. We need gender equality in order to achieve universal access to reproductive health services, to reduce poverty and to promote sustainable development.

We would like to join the United Nations Population Fund in emphasizing the fact that the fight against HIV/AIDS is linked to reproductive and sexual health. We need an integrated and concerted approach to halting the spread of this pandemic and improving access to reproductive health services. To ignore the link between HIV/AIDS and reproductive health is to miss the opportunity to help millions of women, men and their families and prevent unnecessary suffering and untimely death. We are facing the largest youth generation in history, and we have a common responsibility to secure reproductive rights and universal access to reproductive services, and to prevent and stem the spread of sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, and unwanted pregnancies. This task is more urgent than ever.

Population policies and reproductive health and rights are fundamentally about people. The work of civil society organizations, in partnership with other relevant actors, is an indispensable part of our efforts to reach out to people and to secure their rights.

Norway remains fully committed to the Cairo Programme of Action: the Norwegian Government plans to increase overall official development assistance (ODA) to 0.95 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for the next year, and this includes additional support to the United Nations Population Fund. Education is priority number one in Norwegian international development policy. By focusing on education, with special emphasis on girls, we are addressing the underlying causes of gender imbalance and poverty. The Norwegian Government will shortly be launching a new development strategy for children and youth in the South. The motto of the strategy is: "There is not one reason to promote the rights and welfare of children and youth, there are two billion reasons." The strategy reflects the importance the Government attaches to population issues and sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, and especially its concern about the vulnerability of children and young people.

To reaffirm and reinforce our efforts will be a test of solidarity and ability to act on our commitments.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Ten years ago in Cairo we reaffirmed that population growth is an important element in the development process. There, we agreed on an action plan with a strong sense of ownership and commitments for partnership. Today, we meet a decade later to take stock of our achievements since then.

Despite a significant drop in the growth rate between 1994 and 2004, 784 million persons have been added to the world population. The growth rate of the least developed countries remained especially high, at 2.4 per cent per year. During the period 2004 to 2015, 52 countries — accounting for 14 per cent of the world's population — are still expected to experience growth rates above 2 per cent per year. Of those 52, 31 are least developed countries. Population growth remains a valid and vital issue in development and that renders the achievement of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) goals a categorical imperative.

In Bangladesh, a country of 135 million, through an appropriate macroeconomic and social policy mix we have addressed this problem with a considerable degree of success. Some of that success can be measured in terms of reduced population growth and fertility rates, increased life expectancy and expanded child immunization. I do not intend to burden the Assembly with statistics. I shall, nevertheless, mention a few to underscore my point. The fertility rate in Bangladesh has declined from 6.3 per woman in 1973 to 2.9 in 2000. The contraceptive prevalence rate has reached approximately 54 per cent, as compared with approximately 25 per cent in 1985. The under-five mortality rate has declined from 133 per 1,000 live

births in 1992 to 94 in 2000. During the same period the infant mortality rate has also decreased from 94 to 66 per 1,000 live births. Those are but a few examples. In Bangladesh, according to the World Bank, the population growth rate has been reduced at a rate that is unprecedented in recorded history.

The Government is focusing on behavioural-change communication campaigns to promote a wider choice of contraceptives, address adolescent fertility, promote gender equity and equality and improve access to maternal and emergency obstetric care services. Eleven ministries, one private-sector organization, one university and all municipalities are involved in the process of integrating reproductive health and gender concerns into social development efforts. The World Bank stated in a recent report that Bangladesh was undergoing a demographic transition at a low income level without resorting to coercive measures. We thank our bilateral and multilateral development partners for their support. We particularly laud the role of the United Nations Population Fund.

A pragmatic approach by the Government, based on sustained and firm commitments towards ICPD goals, a strategy based on maternal and child health, an extensive network of field workers and clinics, a committed field force with women-to-women services, decentralized service delivery through satellite clinics and Expanded Programme on Immunization centres, all have greatly contributed to those achievements. Nevertheless, we feel it was our investment in education — for both children and adults — that has been the most vital element in that process.

For more than a decade education has been accorded one of highest priorities in our fiscal allocations. We have significantly increased the budget for primary, secondary and girl's education, primary health care and social development. We have been able to substantially increase primary school enrolment, which now stands at 80 per cent —one of the highest levels in developing world. We have achieved gender parity in enrolment at the primary and lower secondary levels. Government efforts are being supplemented by non-governmental organizations, with another home-grown concept — non-formal education — being implemented with State collaboration. That programme targets children between 8 and 10 years of age who have left or have never attended school. Similar programmes are run for adults, and the adult literacy rate has surged to 64 per cent as compared with 34 per cent a decade ago.

As noted by the Secretary-General, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not adequately addressed. Indeed, the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is a sine qua non for the achievement of the MDGs.

Bangladesh remains firmly committed to the principles, goals and targets of the ICPD and the key actions identified in that regard. We believe that development remains primarily a national responsibility — domestically owned and driven. The initiatives taken so far to that end have been, in our view, moving in the right direction. We are making our best efforts. We have achieved some progress, but they still fall short of the ICPD goals. We remain resource-strapped. To achieve our targets, there must be a greater flow of resources to the developing world from our partners. Responding to the concepts of partnership, the global community has made a series of commitments. They must be honoured. Assurances given must be kept. Assistance is needed to build our capacity for a better future for all — an aspiration that must be brought to fruition.

Mr. Latheef (Maldives): Maldives is currently going through an unprecedented phase of social and economic development. Having experienced rapid economic growth and sustained social development during most of the past two decades, population growth rates are now falling steeply.

Current population projections suggest that this year Maldives is witnessing a very momentous stage in its demographic transition. This year, our population include the largest number of adolescents that the country will probably ever have. The repercussions of that demographic wave will be felt for many years to come as those adolescents pass through the various stages of the population age structure.

The most immediate concern of the country at the moment is to expand the job market through economic growth and diversification, while at the same time providing the large numbers of adolescents with the right type of training and skills to enable them to take advantage of the employment opportunities that will be available to them as they become job seekers over the next few years. That calls for a multifaceted approach

to address the needs of the adolescents of today. In addition to addressing the issues of adolescent health and nutrition, appropriate policy and adequate investment in the development of human capital during the current decade are crucial for the country's long-term sustainability.

The dispersal of our population across 200 islands scattered over 90,000 square kilometres of ocean presents major challenges in providing essential health-care services — challenges both for providers and for clients, in terms of costs and timeliness. Furthermore, poor inter-island transport and environmental conditions, such as abrupt and unexpected changes in weather and lack of cultivable land on the islands, make the lack of food security a very real threat for our communities. Those are just some of the harsh realities we have to encounter on a fairly regular basis.

Related to those challenges, recent studies have revealed that undernutrition is a major problem among the Maldivian population. Among children under the age of five, one in four is affected by stunting and 30 per cent are underweight. Those conditions, as we know, are more prevalent among girls: here, Maldives is no exception. Overcoming the problem of undernutrition is a major priority for the country, because we realize its long-lasting implications for the quality of life of individuals and the sustainability of the social and economic development of the whole nation.

Rapid economic growth has increased the developmental gap between the urban and the rural populations. Similarly, it has increased urbanization and urban congestion, creating serious disparities within the urban population. There is an urgent need to address these issues related to urban population growth.

Despite these challenges, Maldives has managed to improve the quality of life of its citizens significantly over the past few decades. Most indicators of social development have improved steadily.

The generous contributions made by our bilateral and multilateral development partners and particularly the support of the United Nations and its various agencies, have been crucial in these achievements. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals have been sources of great inspiration that, in addition to providing us with clear directions, have given us the courage and confidence to forge ahead with our development ideals.

We in Maldives take immense pride in these accomplishments. However, we cannot afford to be complacent. Several areas of priority concern remain to be addressed. Issues of population congestion, overcrowded housing, growing youth unemployment and increasing rates of drug abuse and delinquency need to be addressed urgently. Emphasis needs to be placed on enhancing the quality of education and health care, providing employment opportunities for the growing numbers of secondary school leavers and establishing a social safety net for the elderly, the needy and the deprived on a gender-parity basis, while ensuring equity or access both within urban and rural populations and between urban and rural populations.

Overcoming these hurdles could be daunting for Maldives in the face of graduation from least developed country status in the absence of the kind of supportive mechanism that is currently under formulation to sustain socio-economic growth. In this context, I wish to express my profound gratitude to our development partners and to the United Nations system for their understanding and for the care with which they are proceeding to address this important issue.

I should like to assure the Assembly that Maldives remains committed to implementing the ICPD Programme of Action with a renewed spirit. We are confident that our development partners will continue to extend their full support to us in our efforts.

On behalf of my Government and on my own account, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks to the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Population Fund, for having organized this gathering. I wish the ICPD every success.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): Population and reproductive health rights are among the most sensitive issues that we confront at the United Nations. They are the most personal of choices. They have fundamental and far-reaching public significance. They are at once issues of human rights and of human development.

The agreement forged at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in

1994 is all the more remarkable given those sensitivities. The Cairo Conference was, in every sense, a landmark event, and, along with others, New Zealand today reflects with pride on that achievement. The ICPD now occupies a place at the centre of the international human rights and development architecture. New Zealand reaffirms it without equivocation.

Ten years on, the Cairo Programme of Action remains as important to New Zealand today as it was then. It is chiefly as a result of that international consensus that progress on these issues has been made. It provided us all with the momentum and the mandate. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark has recently signed the World Leaders Statement on ICPD to underscore New Zealand's commitment.

Nevertheless, the facts remain grim. The implementation of reproductive health rights falls short of the target in many parts of the world. Men and women continue to suffer or die in circumstances that are preventable. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to spread and is having an impact on human development in all regions, including New Zealand's own, the Pacific. These facts demand continuing international attention and accelerated action.

I would like to highlight the concern of my Government that discrimination is continuing to impede access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. All too often, individuals are denied such access because of their age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or other status, or because they are too poor to afford access to safe care and services. New Zealand calls upon States to eliminate all forms of discrimination in population policy decisions. Prescriptive religious solutions to this problem are as illusory as they are dangerous.

New Zealand would like to commend the very important work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). New Zealand remains a steadfast supporter of UNFPA's mission and work, and is providing an increasing amount of core and non-core resources to the Fund. Following the withdrawal of one major donor, New Zealand was able to make additional, extraordinary core resources available to UNFPA to help make up the shortfall. We encourage all donors, and other countries in a position to do so, to support UNFPA's work through the provision of adequate funding.

For its part, New Zealand is continuing to grapple with the complex issues of population and reproductive health. New Zealanders, like others, can be reticent about discussing them. New Zealand has seen an increase in unplanned pregnancies, abortion and sexually transmitted infections with long-term consequences for health and fertility. The New Zealand Government is responding by consulting closely with the community and by implementing a sexual and reproductive health strategy.

New Zealand honours its commitment made at Cairo by placing a high priority on the right to sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS education for all and gender equality in our international development assistance programme. We fund programmes that educate and empower people, especially women, by increasing their choices and access to maternal-child health care, sexual and reproductive health care and their ability to protect themselves from and, if necessary, to live with, HIV/AIDS.

Last year, my Government consulted New Zealanders on what they wanted for themselves and their families. The response was clear. They want to be part of a society in which individuals have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy their sexuality, to choose when or if to have children and to keep themselves safe from harm. These are simple wants. They are universal human rights.

On this important occasion, States should put aside politics and look at the facts of population and development. If the world is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, then we must also achieve the ICPD goals. Without one, we cannot achieve the other. Today, New Zealand once more adds its voice to the growing call for the full implementation of the commitments agreed upon at Cairo 10 years ago.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I hope that this colourful event will be an important opportunity not only to enhance social awareness of population and development, reproductive health and gender equality issues, but also to reaffirm Member States' political commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and to the Millennium Development Goals, and to further common efforts and cooperation among Member States.

Insufficient reproductive health services, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, poverty and a lack of financial resources represent major hindrances to resolving population issues. In particular, the economic stagnation and poverty aggravation caused by the negative effects of globalization, as well as all forms of conflict and natural disasters, further complicate the task of resolving population-related issues in the developing countries.

In that regard, I would like briefly to mention the view of my delegation on the concerted efforts of, and cooperation among, Member States to resolve population issues.

First, every country should show firm political will and strong leadership to reaffirm and put into effect its commitment pledged at the ICPD and at the Millennium Summit. It is important for each country to map out and implement a population policy and a national action plan for reproductive health, poverty eradication and economic development that conforms to its own situation, and to concentrate national attention on social issues through concerted efforts and by investing in that area.

Secondly, it is necessary to create a regional and international environment that is favourable to the successful resolution of population issues — including reproductive health and poverty eradication — and to active cooperation in that field. It is therefore essential to respect the sovereignty and right to development of other countries and nations, as that will allow for the establishment of a truly cooperative relationship among countries on the basis of the principle of equality, mutual benefit and non-interference in other's internal affairs, with a view to ending unreasonable sanctions and blockades and creating a fair international economic order.

If the developed countries fulfil their commitment to invest 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product in official development assistance and take measures to allocate 4 per cent of official development assistance to population issues, that will be of substantial assistance in resolving issues related to populations, reproductive health and poverty eradication.

Even during the past 10 years — a difficult period in the history of the country — the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has made substantial efforts in the area of population and development, in consonance with the realities of the country, as it attaches great importance to the ICPD Programme of Action given the Programme's direct connection with the future development of the country and the improved well-being of the people.

Under the wise leadership of the great leader General Kim Jong Il, the Government has set out the constant improvement of the people's well-being as the supreme principle underlying State activities and has paid close attention and made strong efforts to promote the health of the people and the qualitative growth of the population.

Despite the difficult situation of the country as a result of many years of natural disasters, the Government has continued to enforce laws such as the Law on Public Health, family laws and the Law on Gender Equality. The country has a compulsory and free educational system as well as a free medical care system, thereby taking care of women and children at State and public expense.

The Government has systematically improved women's well-being, including reproductive health services through the "section-doctor system", and has been working to resolve the main population-related issues, such as environmental protection, the urbanization of the population, family planning, and ageing.

The Government has acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, taken an active part in international activities related to population and development, and has strengthened international and regional cooperation in that field.

Reaffirming its support for the ICPD Programme of Action, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will in future, as it has in the past, continue to make every possible effort to implement the Programme of Action and to closely cooperate with international organizations, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the international community in order to promote the well-being of the people and achieve the sustainable development of the country.

Mr. Montealegre (Philippines): It is an honour for the Philippines to participate in the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The

Philippines associates itself with the statement of the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For my delegation, today marks a time for celebration and a moment for reflection. It is a time to celebrate the achievement of the goals set out by the ICPD Programme of Action and an opportunity to contemplate ways to address the lack of — or slow — progress in the realization of the commitments made in the area of population and development goals over the past 10 years.

This is also an excellent opportunity to assess our ICPD accomplishments at the national level, share our experiences in achieving them, and identify effective methods for advancing population goals, reproductive health, gender equity and women's empowerment — all geared to hastening the process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The population policy of the Philippines underwent a paradigm shift from the context of demographic targeting to a recognition that population is part of the human development agenda. Embodied in a client-centred, integrated reproductive-health approach, the Philippine Population Management Program (PPMP) has been incorporated since 1993 in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, focusing on the improvement of the quality of life of the Filipinos.

Over the years, the Philippines has registered milestones in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in terms of policy reforms, legislative directions, and participation of civil society and other sectors, as well as the use of innovative strategies in the dissemination of information on the Government's population and reproductive-health goals. That implementation was facilitated by the strong support of both the executive and the legislative branches of the Government, leading to major policy and programme changes that address the needs of individuals and families.

On policy reform, the Government's policy under the PPMP is anchored in responsible parenthood, or the ability of couples to decide freely on the timing and size of their families; respect for life, or protection of the lives of the unborn; proper birth spacing; and informed choice, where couples and individuals are provided with all of the necessary information on natural and artificial methods of family planning.

Significant gains were also achieved in the legislative area. These include the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004; the Anti-Rape Law, passed in 1997; the creation of family courts, which have original jurisdiction over cases of domestic violence and other forms of abuse; and the Paternity Act of 1996, which encourages men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour and participate equally with women in all areas of family and household responsibilities.

Other legislative measures passed were aimed at achieving coverage and delivery in the area of health services, such as the National Health Insurance Act and the Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act; the strengthening of the role of women, youth, indigenous peoples and the elderly in development — such as the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act, the Youth in Nation-Building Act, the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, and the Senior Citizens Act — and protecting the welfare of women, children and migrant workers and their families through such measures as the Anti-Discrimination Against Women Act, and the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act, among others.

The past decade also witnessed the active participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector and other sectors of civil society such as women, men, labour organizations, youth, academia, the religious sector and the media, in mobilizing support for population issues and reproductive health. They formally organized themselves into alliances for a sustained and synchronized advocacy for policy reforms on population issues and reproductive health.

We likewise made progress in the area of information, education and communication of policies and programmes geared to educate the people about the issues surrounding population and their reproductive health. The Government has adopted both non-traditional and creative approaches, such as theatre presentations, concerts and the literary and creative arts to disseminate and popularize the Government's efforts nationwide.

Moreover, the Philippine Government has undertaken steps towards the following: institutionalizing the Philippine Population Expenditures Account, which is envisioned as a monitoring and advocacy tool for encouraging a

greater allocation of resources for population and reproductive health issues; addressing the issues related to service delivery through capacity-building for service providers and partnerships with local Governments, NGOs and the private sector; and encouraging a greater acceptance and practice of family planning methods through the Family Planning Social Acceptance campaign.

Likewise, in support of population data and information management, the Commission on Population of the Philippines, in coordination with the United Nations Population Fund, has developed and installed the Demographic and Socio-Economic Indicator System to address the inadequacy of data on population and reproductive health.

These are some of the landmark achievements and innovative approaches of the Philippines over the last decade on ICPD implementation. However, with a population that stands at 76.5 million since 2002, and a growth rate of 2.3 per cent, the Philippines remains confronted by socio-economic challenges that demand a holistic and comprehensive approach. Cognizant of our commitments to the ICPD goals, the Philippines continues to pursue further efforts to achieve a favourable balance between population distribution and economic activities.

On a final note, the Philippines believes that success in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action depends on the efforts of every sector in individual countries. However, international cooperation would contribute greatly to this implementation, especially in countries that lack adequate resources. In this respect, we call on our developed partners who have not yet done so to do their share in fulfilling their commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance. We also urge them to renew their commitment to the ICPD and fulfil the agreed targets for financial assistance.

Lastly, it is imperative for the General Assembly to look at the phenomenon of migration in line with the ICPD goals. There is a need for closer international cooperation between the various countries involved, in order to fully manage the phenomenon of migration in an era of increasing globalization.

Mr. Al-Sibai (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to commend the efforts of Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for her efforts to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which was held in Cairo in 1994. Its agenda included a set of principles, goals and procedures to deal with population and development issues and with the great challenges they pose in a way that achieves balance and coordination in the mutual relationship between population and economic growth within the framework of sustainable development. These goals are also aimed at meeting the population, development, social and environmental needs for current and future generations and at raising the level and quality of life in different fields.

Since the ICPD was held in Cairo, the Syrian Arab Republic has undertaken many measures and policies that focus on achieving the principles and objectives that were set out by the ICPD. The most important of these are the following.

First, in order to include population issues in development strategies, a national population conference was held in Damascus in November 2001, under the slogan of "Harmony between population growth and socio-economic growth." Secondly, we have included, in the ninth five-year plan, for socio-economic development for the years 2001 to 2005, a special section on population objectives, with the purpose of incorporating demographic changes in development plans and harmony between socio-economic and population growth. Thirdly, we have promoted strengthening the role of civil society in the process of development. Fourthly, the National Population Committee was formed on 30 January 2003, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and with the participation of the relevant ministers, leaders of non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations. Moreover, subcommittees were formed on the subject of population and health throughout the provinces of Syria.

As for improving the quality of life for Syria's population and combating poverty, more investments were made in the area of human resources and the generation of income, especially for those of limited income. An unemployment association was established, aimed at resolving the unemployment problem by granting soft loans for small and medium-sized projects, especially to youth. New rolling funds were also set up in rural areas.

With regard to the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality and equity, the following efforts were made. First, support was given to micro-enterprises run by women in the form of rolling funds. Secondly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified in 2002. Thirdly, women were given the right to inherit their pension funds. Fourthly, a general association for the family was established in order to strengthen the role of the family in society. Fifthly, Syria continued to expand the participation of women in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of Government and various decision-making circles.

In terms of reproductive health, the infrastructure for reproductive health service providers was improved and access to reproductive health services was facilitated. Women's rights to receive services and information on reproductive health were affirmed, the staff that offer those services were developed and trained and youth were enabled to have access to reproductive health care.

We also implemented programmes and established national funds that focus on the following issues: health, reproductive health, strategies for family planning, and the development of population strategies, incentives and awareness-raising strategies. We also coordinated closely with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) within the framework of the national programmes of coordination between Syria and UNFPA, the most recent of which was the sixth national programme for 2002 to 2006.

All these efforts led to a decrease in the population growth rate from 3.4 in 1994 to almost 2.45 at present. Moreover, there was an increase in school enrolment and a decrease in maternal mortality rates to 65.4 for every 100,000 live births. There was an also increase in life expectancy, which is now 70 years for males and 71 for females and an improvement in and spread of reproductive health services.

We must exert more effort in the field of the population issues that are in line with the directives of our President, as stated in his speech during the eighth legislative round in March 2003. In that statement, he said that we must not forget to focus on the most urgent issue, which is the high growth rate of the population in Syria, which consumes any increase in economic growth rates, causes an increase in unemployment and hinders the provision of basic services to citizens.

All countries of the world face the problem of mobilizing their resources. The Government of Syria is working to provide and secure the financial resources required for national activities carried out in accordance with the Cairo Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals, which are financed from the Government's regular budget and by non-governmental and civil society organizations and UNFPA.

Since 2002, the Syrian Government has increased its contribution to the regular resources of the Fund from 10 to 15 per cent of th total spending on projects. That came from Government regular resources. Moreover, our contribution will increase again in 2005, and to support projects in Syria, we will allocate special funding for the purchase of family planning needs, to be put at the disposal of UNFPA to carry out their programmes. However, the resources currently available are inadequate. Resources for implementing projects and programmes in the area of population, development and reproductive health are insufficient, but the Government is seeking to increase such resources in order to cover the expenses of implementing the aforesaid projects.

We have also made efforts to carry out a national population strategy in order to ensure economic benefits and achieve linkage between population growth and economic growth in order to improve the quality of life and to fulfil human development and sustainable development needs in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Toro Jiménez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are meeting today to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Conference unanimously adopted the Programme of Action, which, in 1994 defined for the next 20 years the collective course of international and national policies to assist our Governments in implementing measures for reproductive health, the rights of women and a healthy, balanced and productive population. On this occasion, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its commitment, shared by 179 countries, to carry out policies and programmes inspired by the principles underlying the Programme of Action.

Our Constitution of 1999 fully incorporates the legal and political principles concerning the population, economic growth and sustainable development. The Constitution provides the framework for the plan for the nation's economic and social development for the period from 2001 to 2007 in the areas of social and territorial equilibrium. Those guidelines are in accordance with the commitments made at the Cairo Conference.

In accordance with the international community's aspirations and national efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality, as established in the Millennium Declaration and the Cairo Conference, my Government is carrying out at the national level, with extrabudgetary resources, a campaign against poverty through a set of programmes in the areas of education, health, labour, food and income improvement. Those programmes work to eliminate illiteracy, create opportunities for studies for those excluded from secondary and university education, and provide primary health care for those suffering diseases engendered by poverty. The campaign is being carried out with support from the sister Republic of Cuba. The programmes also include training for productive work in order to reduce unemployment, plans to encourage farming in order to encourage domestic development and strengthen national sovereignty and immediate attention to the most urgent food needs of the poor. All those plans are part of the so-called missions to encourage harmonious coordination of the various sectors of our national development.

One of the first results has been that we have improved life expectancy. In addition, according to the most recent indicators, 8 per cent of the Venezuelan population, which has been poor for more than 200 years, is now beginning to emerge from poverty. There are other important advances. For example, in the area of legislation, I should mention the adoption of the organic law on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents and the law on violence against women and the family, as well as the creation and functioning of the National Institute for Women, which has been given considerable resources. In addition, we have instituted gender equality in the Bolivarian Schools.

The commemoration of the International Conference on Population and Development taking place at this important moment of international life gives States greater opportunities for economic and technological resources in order to encourage sustainable development and mobilize and optimize human and financial resources to solve special and general problems in this area.

Today's meeting is propitious for renewing the political will that inspired us on that occasion and for encouraging new alliances and commitments to improve the quality of life of human beings, thus enabling them to fully enjoy their rights, with vision and a conviction in a new humanism.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) offers us another opportunity to assess our achievements and look for further solutions to whatever constraints we face in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and, ultimately, the Millennium Development Goals. The five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5) showed that the ICPD goals were relevant and that much progress had been made in advancing them. At the same time, it was recognized that more concerted action was also needed in a few areas, and additional benchmarks were set for four priority issues: education and literacy, reproductive health care, maternal mortality reduction and HIV/AIDS.

As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, ICPD+10, today, I would like to state that Malaysia reaffirms its full commitment to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We have initiated changes when necessary in our development policies, including in programmes and in institutional and organizational frameworks. This has been done in order to support the strategy of integrating population issues into all development planning policies and programmes as envisaged in the ICPD Programme of Action. We are fully conscious of the need not to link population policies and programmes to demographic goals and targets, but rather to place population concerns at the heart of sustainable development in keeping with ICPD goals.

Malaysia's current population programmes have been revised in accordance with the thematic areas of concern and priorities of the country and in line with the ICPD Programme of Action: population, family development and reproductive health in the context of social equitability, poverty alleviation and environmentally sound development. With the ICPD, the integration of the economic, social, demographic and environmental dimensions of development has been further strengthened. Measures have also been taken to promote sustainable consumption and production, protect the environment, sustainably manage the resource base, enhance human, institutional and infrastructure capacity and improve the quality of life of the people.

Allow me to highlight some of the areas in which Malaysia has made significant gains. It has succeeded in reducing the incidence of poverty from 17.1 per cent in 1990 to less than 5 per cent in 2003. Under the currently implemented Eighth Malaysia Development Plan, for the period of 2001 to 2005, the thrust of our poverty eradication programme is to reduce the incidence of poverty to 0.5 per cent by the year 2005.

Malaysian women have made significant progress in almost all areas of development in the last three decades. The advancement of women in Malaysia is evident in many sectors, including in public and political life. Currently in the Cabinet there are three women Ministers — very dynamic ones — three women Deputy Ministers and six women Parliamentary Secretaries. There are 22 women members of Parliament. Women make up 46.2 per cent of the civil service, with a number of them highly placed in decision-making positions. The maternal mortality ratio is currently around 30 per 100,000. Women in Malaysia are expected to live to the age of 75. Comparatively, Malaysian men have a life expectancy of 70 years.

Primary education is almost universal. The national literacy rate is 91 per cent, while the rate among females aged 10 and above is 85 per cent. Almost 70 per cent of undergraduates are females and this has enabled almost half of the women to gain employment. The participation of females in the labour force has also increased from 41.9 per cent in 1991, prior to the ICPD, to 48 per cent in 2003.

To further demonstrate the Malaysian Government's commitment towards gender equality and empowerment of women, the Ministry of Women and Family Development was established in February 2001 with the objective of mainstreaming women in nation-building, ensuring the full integration and maximum participation of women in national development and strengthening the family system so as to establish a quality generation. On 27 March 2004, the Ministry was given added responsibility over a broad range of social issues and it has since been named the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

The Plan of Action for the advancement of women, launched in 1997, is currently being reviewed. In August 2001, the Federal Constitution was amended to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender. A database on women's health is also being developed by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to improve the status of women's health. The Government has also amended relevant legislation on crimes against women, including laws relating to rape and domestic violence.

Malaysia has also undertaken several initiatives to ensure that family planning services are provided under the broader package of reproductive health. In this regard, a central coordinating committee on reproductive health has also been formed to look into the policies, strategies and optimal ways of integrating other reproductive health components into the primary health-care system and into family planning programmes.

The issue of HIV/AIDS is also being seriously addressed in Malaysia. Since the first case of AIDS was reported in Malaysia in 1986, HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes have been established. A nationwide campaign on HIV/AIDS was first launched in 1991 to provide gender sensitive education about sexuality, life skills and behavioural change. Free HIV testing and counselling are available in all Government hospitals and some health clinics. A special community mobilization programme for youth has been in place since 1996. At the same time, efforts have also continued towards gender-based programmes for women and children through our Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV Programme. This has helped improve the chances of HIV-positive mothers delivering healthy babies.

Given prevailing demographic trends, it is projected that by the year 2020, the number of elderly

people in Malaysia will constitute about 9.5 per cent of an estimated total population of 33.4 million. Although Malaysia is considered as having a "young" population, the early sensitization and consciousness-raising efforts of the Government on the issue of ageing reflects its awareness of significant changes taking shape in the demographic process. Over the years, the Government has introduced various policies and programmes, such as the National Welfare Policy in 1990, the National Policy for Older Persons in 1995 and the Plan of Action for Older Persons in 1998. These are all aimed at improving the quality of life of older persons and integrating them into the mainstream of development.

The role of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as partners in the implementation of population and related programmes has also been recognized and supported in Malaysia. Their involvement, participation and sharing of resources have been pivotal to the success of the Government's population related programmes. Since ICPD, annual dialogues between Government and the NGOs have been conducted to facilitate greater "smart partnership". Recognizing their role, the Government has also provided grants to those NGOs to enable them to play a more effective role in the activities and programmes in the country. For example, the Government works closely with the Malaysian AIDS Council, a leading NGO, to address the HIV/AIDS problem.

The ICPD has demonstrated to the world that if countries aspire to provide adequate opportunity for a better life to their citizens, they need to incorporate the appropriate population policies into their development strategy. Malaysia is fully aware of that and remains committed to the ICPD objectives at the national, regional and international levels. However, we are conscious that many of the developing countries are still unable to meet those basic goals for lack of financial and other resources. In that regard, it is important that adequate financial and technical resources be provided to them through various means. Promises made in the various international summits and conferences must be fulfilled by both developed and developing countries. For its part, Malaysia has extended its modest contribution, within its means, towards assisting other developing countries in the context of South-South cooperation, including under the Malaysia Technical Cooperation Programme.

Mr. Ayari (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): To begin, I would like to convey our appreciation and esteem for the efforts made by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and in particular those of its Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, in seeking to implement the commitments made at the Cairo Conference. The tenth anniversary of that Conference is of particular importance to us as it is being held at a time when the international community is facing many challenges. It is also an important opportunity for us to take stock — to draw the necessary lessons and to assess the measures that need to be taken in order to attain the goals we have set.

Despite the accumulation of wealth and the amazing technological progress that has been made, the international scene continues to present us with the paradoxical image of a world in which most people still live in poverty and destitution, particularly in Africa. In that context, it is of concern to us that, 10 years after Cairo, the objectives set by the international community are still far from being implemented.

It is true that encouraging progress has been made in implementing the goals of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). There is greater awareness of problems relating to population and development and the need to mainstream those concerns into development strategies to combat poverty. There is greater awareness of the drop in world population growth rates, and there has been an almost universal drop in fertility rates. Birth spacing is being practised. Mortality has dropped, and consequently life expectancy has increased. Family planning and other reproductive health services have expanded, and access to education has improved, particularly for girls. The measures being taken to combat sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS have been enhanced, to fight those diseases more effectively.

Nevertheless, we must say that that progress has been unequal and, in many cases, insufficient. It has been acknowledged that if current trends continue, many developing countries will not be able to implement the commitments of the ICPD Programme of Action, which are essential for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. We note with concern that, notwithstanding the efforts and sacrifices made, the developing countries, particularly in Africa, have fallen far behind in implementing those goals. The elimination of poverty and malnutrition, the spread of

the HIV/AIDS epidemic, difficulties in gaining access to reproductive health care and to drinking water and sanitation services, rapid population growth, increasing problems caused by rapid urbanization — all these are areas where additional efforts need to be made.

We support the appeal made by UNFPA and echoed by delegations that have spoken from this rostrum regarding the need to guarantee proper financing of the Cairo agenda. If that agenda is not properly funded it will be impossible to achieve the results we hope to obtain. Clearly, the lack of resources is undermining UNFPA efforts to provide family planning services, to reduce maternal mortality rates, to prevent HIV/AIDS and to meet the needs of young people and of the poor. Indeed, it would also harm progress made in the area of development and poverty reduction in poor countries.

Implementing the Cairo commitments — or, indeed the commitments undertaken at other conferences and meetings held under United Nations auspices — requires the establishment of an enabling international environment: an increase in official development assistance, the establishment of a just and equitable trading system that promotes development, the cancellation of debt and its rechanelling into social and environmental projects and the transfer of technologies to developing countries.

We also underscore the need to give greater attention to the problem of migration and the impact of migration on development. Accordingly, we support the convening of an international conference on migration and development to identify ways to optimize international development migration trends. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the General Assembly to have a high-level dialogue on that question in 2006.

Tunisia very much supports the principles of the Cairo Programme of Action, and we wish to reiterate our commitment to its implementation. Our development approach is a comprehensive one, combining economic development and social progress. Indeed, we believe that the ultimate goal of economic development is to ensure the promotion of the full development of humankind and to ensure the full exercise by the individual of his rights. Tunisia has invested heavily in human development, and it is one of the countries that has significantly reduced its poverty rates, which now stand at 4.2 per cent. Today, the middle class accounts for three quarters of our population. Life expectancy is 73.2 years, whereas it was only 67 years in 1987.

The various components of our population policy, including increased school attendance for girls and boys — which now stands at 99 per cent — greater involvement of women in the job market and strengthening mother-child health-care programmes, have resulted in our control over demographic growth trends, which now stand at just 1.1 per cent.

With regard to the position of women in Tunisia, we would stress that Tunisian women have graduated from demanding their fundamental rights and have moved on to the status of full partners in all areas of national life.

We hope that this commemorative day will encourage the entire international community to reaffirm its commitment to the objectives of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference and will lend new impetus to international solidarity to build a better future for the whole of humankind.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): First, I wish to underscore that the delegation of Togo associates itself with the statement made this morning by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77.

Since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo 10 years ago, Togo, despite the difficulties faced by developing countries, and particularly the least developed among them, has made notable progress in implementing the Programme of Action of that Conference. Indeed, it is essential to emphasize that that Programme of Action has been the principle reference document for the Togolese Government, one that has allowed us to solve our population problems and that has thereby contributed to the reduction of poverty in all areas.

Thus conscious of the positive impact that the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action would have on population in the medium and long term, the Government of Togo was inspired to adopt a national population policy in 1998, which since that time has served as a guideline for all our activities undertaken in the field.

In reviewing our national policy on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of ICPD, policy makers noted that population factors have a decisive impact on poverty, which unfortunately particularly exacerbates

the spread of HIV/AIDS. They also underscored that Togo's national population policy is in perfect harmony with the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals, insofar as it guarantees the rights of populations to access reproductive health services without discrimination. That is why Togo has given priority to demographic variables in finalizing its poverty reduction strategy paper.

The well-being of children is linked to and has a direct impact on the health of the mother and on the entire family. We wish to reaffirm that it is indispensable to fight against both infant and maternal mortality in order to continue seeing the improvement of the well-being of populations. Furthermore, the economic and social development of our countries makes it necessary to maintain very close cooperation between institutions in the public sector and in civil society. In this respect, we commend the ever-increasing role the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are playing to help the people of Togo.

Questions concerning gender equality and equity and all forms of violence and exploitation with regard to women are also of major concern to us. That is why, in 1998, the National Assembly adopted a law in Togo prohibiting female genital mutilation.

Following the ICPD guidelines, Togo has encouraged greater involvement of women in the government decision-making process. Thus, women have been increasingly represented at the National Assembly and in the Government. They also have occupied many posts in public and private organizations.

A comparison of development indicators between 1994 and 2004 indicates to us that, despite the difficult situation of the country, the Government has quickly committed itself to implementing the ICPD recommendations in order to improve the socio-economic situation at the national level. This action was reflected in the adoption and implementation of a national population policy, a reproductive health policy, and a strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, a National Council to Combat AIDS, under the chairmanship of the Head of State, His Excellency Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, who signed the declaration of world leaders, is actively working throughout the country. In addition, a national youth policy is being prepared to better involve young people. We must also point out that the enrolment of girls in school is increasing, and there were considerably fewer drop outs.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Ministerial Conference of African countries held in Dakar in June 2004 on the occasion of ICPD + 10, Togo is presently drawing up a more dynamic plan of action aimed at better linking ICPD, the Millennium Development Goals and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Furthermore, proper evaluation of the results of our action requires reliable indicators, and these indicators require data collection and good data processing. While resources are generally available in the developed countries for that end, we must note that, despite our efforts, conducting surveys and having reliable databases require considerable financial investment. Togo's resources are very limited.

For this reason, Togo wishes to make a pressing appeal to the international community for increased financial support for UNFPA, so it can continue to help our country to carry out the Cairo Programme of Action and the recommendations of ICPD + 5 and ICPD + 10. There is no doubt whatsoever that investing in the implementation of the recommendations of ICPD is a sure way to combat poverty and to prevent conflict in the world.

The Government of Togo reiterates its commitment to implementing the conclusions and recommendations of the regional review conference at Dakar and thanks UNFPA for its constant support to Togo in its fight against poverty.

Mr. Dajer (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia's commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Cairo Programme of Action is not only unswerving but also tangible in terms of its results that show considerable progress in the different areas covered by that instrument.

Colombia, the third country of Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of the size of its population, has been recognized for the progress it has made in its demographic transition, the fact that we have surpassed a considerable number of the thresholds agreed in Cairo, and the progress we have made in promoting South-South cooperation in the field of population.

Decreasing fertility rates, better health services and prevention of illnesses have helped increase life expectancy. Child mortality is considerably lower than the world average.

Colombia, in this event, is joining in commemorating the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development and reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan welcomes the opportunity to speak on this important agenda item. We strongly support the approach that our work should be based on the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits, and that the coordinated follow-up process should cover all the major United Nations conferences and address the issue of implementation. The process of reviewing implementation, while preserving the identity and thematic unity of each conference and summit, is an important task and should be pursued with vigour.

The review and appraisal of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action provided us with the opportunity to renew our strong commitment to the implementation of the goals and principles agreed upon in Cairo in 1994, as well as to review the progress achieved and the challenges that remain.

We appreciate the work done by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in providing us with comprehensive reports and surveys on progress made in such important areas as reproductive health and family planning, health and mortality, international migration and gender equality.

Ten years after Cairo, Azerbaijan remains committed to the principles and goals enshrined in the Programme of Action and continues to work towards their comprehensive implementation. My country believes that the effective implementation of the Cairo goals is closely linked to social and economic development. In spite of the progress achieved, we need to reinforce our efforts in a number of priority areas in order to eliminate the existing barriers.

The international and regional events held this year within the process of the ICPD review and appraisal have identified a number of common concerns. The European Population Forum held in Geneva in January 2004 revealed dramatic differences in life expectancy and the well-being of the population, as well as the problems of the increase in trafficking in human beings and the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the whole United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region. Azerbaijan fully concurs with the findings of the Forum, which emphasized the need to increase funding, share best practice models and mobilize local communities to address these issues, as well as the necessity to set policy and regulatory frameworks, improve their coherence and promote human rights, good governance, transparency and accountability.

In my country, two major factors greatly affected the situation in the field of population and development, as well as overall social and economic development there during the past decade. These two factors are the transition period and armed conflict. The first factor led to increased internal and external migration. The social and economic crisis that emerged resulted in a decline in quality of life and an increase in the maternal and child mortality rates.

The armed conflict and occupation of a significant part of Azerbaijani territories resulted in the emergence of some one million refugees and internally displaced persons. The policy of ethnic cleansing pursued by Armenia against the Azerbaijani population has caused the situation to deteriorate further and has dramatically affected the structure and distribution of the population in my country.

Azerbaijan came to Cairo in 1994 with more than 400,000 women and nearly 200,000 children refugees and internally displaced persons living in extremely difficult conditions in temporary shelters; hundreds of children had become orphans; and nearly 50,000 people had become disabled. Given the lack of safe water and sanitation facilities, the number of cases of infectious disease, such as hepatitis A, measles, diphtheria and poliomyelitis, among this population group has increased. Women refugees and internally displaced persons living in tent camps suffered from gastric disorders, skin infections, malaria, tuberculosis, anaemia, mental illness and gynaecological disorders, among other things.

That situation was another important reason for us to join the international consensus in Cairo and commit ourselves to eliminating existing problems and

to strengthening our efforts to effectively address the most acute problems of population and development.

In its follow-up to Cairo in 1999, Azerbaijan adopted a national strategy paper on population and development based on the Cairo principles. As set out in that paper, one of the main objectives of our national policy in the field of population and development is to tackle the negative demographic trends and the promotion of population growth in line with overall national development policy. The State programme on population has been further elaborated and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for consideration. The issues of reproductive health and reproductive rights, reducing the rate of maternal and child mortality, providing adequate reproductive health services and addressing the issue of family planning, including, inter alia, the introduction of new methods of contraception, have been selected as priority areas for further activities. The national programme on reproductive health has provided a good contribution to our poverty reduction and economic development strategy paper.

My country attaches particular importance to the regulation of migration processes. We continue to take measures aimed at strengthening relevant national legislation, eliminating illegal migration, protecting rights of migrant workers and establishing relevant institutional mechanisms to that end. This year, we adopted a concept paper for State policy in the field of migration. A number of bilateral agreements have been signed in the area of the social protection of migrant workers. We have successfully cooperated with the International Organization for Migration on a cluster project, which provides assistance in the repatriation of Azerbaijani citizens illegally residing in Western European countries.

Fulfilling our commitment to promoting gender equality is another important priority. The issues of women's health and their access to and use of reproductive health services, the education of women and girls and the elimination of violence against women remain major issues for our gender equality policy. While we have established an institutional framework and are currently in the process of adopting the relevant legislation, we still have much room for improvement. Challenges remain in important areas such as the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, the situation of women refugees and internally displaced persons, strengthening the economic and social status of women and promoting their increased participation in decision-making processes.

Family protection and family planning constitute an integral part of our policy in the field of population and development. The Government, in cooperation with the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), has established a network of family planning centres, which provide medical and counselling services to families. A legislative framework has been enacted to ensure equal rights and the sharing of child-rearing responsibilities between both parents. A set of measures aimed at supporting young families and families with children is also being implemented.

Last but not least, we would like to underline the key role of the United Nations Population Fund in promoting the implementation of the outcome of the ICPD at the national and international levels, and we commend the Executive Director of the UNFPA, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, for her valuable contribution to that process. Azerbaijan once again reiterates its full support for the Fund and renews its commitment to further implement the ICPDs Programme of Action.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): I am pleased to have the opportunity to make a statement for the United Kingdom. In doing so, I should like fully to echo and support the views expressed in the statement of the European Union Presidency.

The International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in 1994, marked a significant shift. It rejected the notion of population control, doing away with demographic targets as the basis of policy and instead putting people first. It put people's rights concerning their own reproductive health at the centre of the development agenda. Cairo also underscored the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality in the fight against poverty.

The ICPD has served as a force for positive change in countries all over the world. That was recognized most recently at the various United Nations regional commission meetings to assess progress towards meeting ICPD goals. Countries' overwhelming and continuing commitment to and ownership of the ICPD agenda has been striking: striking, but not surprising, because the Programme of Action has provided a framework for policy, action and change for so many countries.

The ICPD Programme of Action also provides, of course, the foundation for many of the Millennium Development Goals, and the key Cairo goal of reproductive health is relevant, and related, not only to the health Millennium Goals but to all the Millennium Goals.

I would like to take a minute to recall how the ICPD Programme of Action and the Cairo goal of reproductive health are related to the Millennium Development Goals. Reproductive health and choice help families escape poverty. Families that are able to space the births of their children and plan the number of children they have can invest more in their children, including for basic necessities, schooling and education, and so improve prospects for opportunity. And given the choice and the means, families often decide to have fewer children.

A rapidly growing population makes it harder for Governments to keep up needed investments in health and education. So reproductive health, in providing a choice, also has a role in achieving universal primary education.

Reproductive health and rights are fundamental to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The ability of women to control their own fertility and to be free from violence and abuse seem obvious, yet are absolutely basic aspects of women's empowerment. If women are to take part fully in society, they must have better access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. There is more and more evidence to show how women able to make their own choices have more opportunities. So, reproductive rights are also essential to women's human rights.

The links between reproductive health and child health are strong and well established, even though they sometimes seem to be overlooked. So, reproductive health and family planning help to reduce child mortality. Reproductive health and family planning also play a key role in improving maternal health. Birth spacing helps to lower overall risk of maternal death and injury. So, reproductive health saves women's lives.

Turning to the Millennium Goal to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, there is wide recognition that sexual and reproductive health services provide an important opening for HIV prevention, as well as for preventing and treating other sexually transmitted infections. Adolescent sexual health and rights need special attention in order to stem the AIDS epidemic and to decrease maternal death. Better information, sex education and sexual and reproductive health services must be made available to all. And by contributing to slower population growth, reproductive health also plays a role in contributing to environmental sustainability.

Finally, reproductive health provides a focus for a stronger global partnership for development, for example through the kind of action needed to secure the supply and availability of reproductive health commodities. Too many people in poor countries are still not able to get hold of basic reproductive health supplies and contraceptives, including condoms.

Progress has been made. But we all know that much more remains to be done. The United Kingdom unequivocally reaffirms the ICPD. But we need to move beyond reaffirmation; reaffirmation is not enough. We need much more action, and yes, more resources. More must be done to remove the obstacles faced by the poor and the marginalized in their access to basic health and reproductive health services. To do this, we must work to increase the supply of those services, including commodities, and ensure that men, women and young people are aware of them and demand them.

We need to strengthen capacity in the health sector. This means more doctors, more nurses and more support to countries to help them recruit, train and retain enough health workers. Reproductive health and reproductive rights will remain an illusion for many without functioning health systems. More money is needed, and the international community needs to do more. It is not realistic to expect poor countries that have $2 per capita a year to invest in healthcare to make significant headway.

That is why the United Kingdom has committed to reaching the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of annual gross national income being spent on development assistance and has set a deadline of 2013 to reach it. Our commitment is demonstrated also through our support of the Economic Commission for Africa, through the additional £1.5 billion — that is, $2.7 billion — that we have made available to tackle HIV/AIDS over the next three years, and most recently through the Prime Minister's support for the World Leaders Statement in Support of ICPD.

The United Kingdom was one of the first countries to sign the ICPD World Leaders Statement at head of State or Government level. My Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has asked me to say how important he thinks the ICPD Programme of Action is as a foundation for tackling poverty and for promoting women's reproductive rights. We will not reduce poverty unless women have control over their own reproductive health. So, I am pleased also to announce that the United Kingdom is making a new contribution of £10 million — that is, $18 million — to help meet the gap in funding for reproductive health commodities.

Looking ahead, next year's United Nations event to mark the Millennium Summit will provide an unprecedented opportunity to renew and to intensify the international community's commitment to tackling poverty and inequity in the following 10 years. In our view, it is vital that this opportunity should be seized, and in our view, the Millennium Development Goals cannot be attained without progress also in achieving the Cairo goal of reproductive health and reproductive rights for all.

Ms. Gallardo (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the people and the Government of El Salvador, may I say how pleased we are at the convening of these very important meetings of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994.

My delegation supports the views expressed on this subject by the delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Government of El Salvador considers this a good opportunity to reaffirm the Cairo Declaration and Programme of Action, particularly because we believe that the main objectives of the Conference remain valid: incorporating population issues in all relevant national development programmes and involving local governmental entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and local communities in all activities relating to the subject of population.

The goal, it should be recalled, was to increase the options available to individuals in dealing with population questions, thus contributing to broad social progress, promoting equality between men and women and meeting people's reproductive health needs — in other words, the needs of everyone of reproductive age.

People's everyday activities are affected by population changes. The use of natural resources, environmental conditions and economic and social development, population growth, migration and urbanization are closely related to the phenomenon of poverty, as we all know. Putting an end to wasteful consumption and production patterns, ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources, reversing the deterioration of the environment and redressing social inequalities between men and women are shared problems that affect us all.

Widespread poverty remains the main challenge to our attaining the goal of development. The persistence of economic inequality between countries and the economic and social inequality of women within countries obstruct efforts to improve the standards of living of millions of persons, especially women.

As we know, poverty goes hand in hand with illiteracy and limited access to health and family planning services. Poor women often have little possibility of gaining access to these services, and they are doomed to live in a vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, social marginalization and gender-related violence. All of those factors contribute to high rates of fertility, disease and mortality and to low economic productivity in our countries. Moreover, poverty is related to the unsustainable use of water and land resources and causes a grave deterioration of the environment.

Sustainable development depends on our alleviating poverty, and this, in turn, requires sustained economic growth. Since the poorest segments of the population include a disproportionate number of women, the elimination of social and economic discrimination against women is a prerequisite for the reduction of poverty in our countries, the promotion of economic growth and the attainment of rational population policies.

Because of El Salvador's own history, we focus on the subject of migration, which has acquired great importance in our national policy, as it has on the international agenda. We believe that the subject of migration should be placed in a broad context, going beyond the implementation of public policies to control the legal entry of persons into a destination country.

To deal with this, a phenomenon that characterizes our region, the countries of Central America and of North America have, in recent years, held periodic consultations in the framework of the Regional Conference on Migration: the Puebla process. The high levels of migration flows, caused in part by major changes in the international system — in particular the expansion of globalization, the creation and use of new communications technologies, the behaviour of the international economy and open markets — make it necessary that the subject of migration be approached from a broad and comprehensive perspective, given its profound political, economic and social repercussions in each of our countries. That is why the Government of El Salvador supports the high-level dialogue on migration proposed for 2006. At the same time, we invite all delegations to approach that event with an open mind and a flexible spirit so that we may consider the elements that are potentially controversial from an innovative standpoint, for the benefit of the millions of migrants of the world.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment and political will of the Government of El Salvador to make the human person the centre and the subject of development. In that context, we reaffirm the validity and timeliness of the Cairo Declaration and Programme of Action and all of the principles, objectives and actions aimed at contributing to progress in the attainment of development goals, in particular those set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Mrs. Taylor Roberts (Jamaica): First, let me say that my delegation fully associates itself with the statements made by the delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Barbados on behalf of member States of the Caribbean Community.

I also wish to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement this morning, as well as the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for her remarks made on this item.

Ten years ago, at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo, Jamaica gave its full support to the principles and goals that were established in the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference, including the reduction in infant, child and maternal mortality and the provision of universal access to education, reproductive health care and family planning services. Today, Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to those principles and goals.

We have noted that a number of forums have been held this year at the international, regional and national levels in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and in all cases, one message was clear: the ICPD Programme of Action continues to be relevant.

Issues of population and development were recognized at Cairo as central to the existence of any society. Consequently, our response to those issues will be a determining factor in the quality of life of our people and the sustainability of our economies.

The UNFPA report, *State of World Population 2004*, indicates that many developing countries have made great strides in putting the ICPD recommendations into action. However, it also points to the fact that inadequate resources are one of the main obstacles to meeting challenges such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, unmet needs for family planning and high maternal mortality rates in the least developed countries.

In Jamaica, we have sought to translate the commitments made at Cairo into national policies and programmes. We also recognize that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is closely linked to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

In honouring our commitments, we have strengthened existing partnerships with civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the areas of legislative reform, policy formulation and programme implementation. Those actions were accomplished with the valuable assistance provided by UNFPA through its national and regional representatives. Partnership with UNFPA has played a significant role in achievements made by Jamaica so far in such areas as: the formulation of a plan of action on population and development, consistent with what was agreed in Cairo; the development and implementation of a national poverty eradication policy and programme of action; and national policies on youth and senior citizens.

At this 10-year midpoint for the ICPD Programme of Action, Member States need to focus on what further actions we can take to achieve the goals to

which we committed ourselves. For Jamaica's part, we have seen the benefits of strengthened intersectoral policy coordination and political support, including bipartisan consensus on certain budgetary allocation issues. It is recognized, however, that significant resources will be required over the next 10 years to effectively translate those plans and programmes into reality.

We take this opportunity to congratulate this year's recipients of the United Nations Population Award for their tremendous efforts in helping to improve the health and quality of life of people around the world.

Finally, we also commend the work done by UNFPA for its effectiveness in facilitating the elaboration and implementation of population policies and strategies, especially in developing countries. Now, UNFPA deserves even more support from the donor community to help provide the resources needed to meet the immense challenges that we have to overcome.

Mr. Gansukh (Mongolia): While associating itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, my delegation wishes to make a few additional remarks.

At the outset, it should be noted that the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was not an isolated event: its Programme of Action was built on the considerable international consensus that had been developed since the World Population Conference at Bucharest in 1974 and the International Conference on Population, 1984, at Mexico City. The ICPD outcomes made significant contributions to the major conferences that followed it. The Cairo consensus paved the way for the Millennium Development Goals, widely recognized as a blueprint for building better lives for people everywhere in the twenty-first century.

The *State of World Population 2004* report of UNFPA clearly indicates that significant achievements have been made since Cairo in integrating population-related issues into development policies. Nevertheless, much remains to be done. Many countries are still in critical need of sufficient human and other resources and sorely need to strengthen their institutional capacities, obtain a wider exchange of information and technology and forge genuine partnerships. It is vitally important to invest in the education, health and human rights of women and young people to ensure a more equitable and sustainable world. Today's challenges call on all Governments and the international community to mobilize their political will and resources to make the vision of Cairo a reality.

The Government of Mongolia highly values the spirit, principles and objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action and has attached high priority to its implementation. An effective population policy is of particular importance for Mongolia, a country that has a population of 2.7 million scattered over a vast territory of more than 1.5 million square kilometres. Over the past decade, an intensive process of policy formulation has taken place to integrate population concerns into all aspects of economic and social activities. This has resulted in the adoption by the Parliament of Mongolia of the State Policy on family development in 2003 and the State Policy on population development in 2004.

Mongolia's commitment to the principles and objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action is further embodied in a number of national action plans, including the National Programmes on household livelihood capacity support, reproductive health, development and protection of children and the National Programme on gender equality.

I am pleased to announce that in implementing our population policy we have successfully cooperated with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) through its Office in Mongolia. The first countrywide programme began in 1992 and the third countrywide programme was initiated in 2002. Thus, we successfully conducted, in cooperation with UNFPA, a reproductive health survey in 1998 and the population and housing census in 2000, both meeting international standards. The decade of cooperation between UNFPA and Mongolia has laid a solid foundation for future collaboration.

Just a week ago, on 8 October 2004, in cooperation with the United Nations country team led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Mongolia, the first National Report on the status of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was officially launched in Ulaanbaatar with the participation of the President and Prime Minister of Mongolia. The report marks an important milestone in the ongoing efforts to assess the

achievements, challenges and opportunities for development that benefit all citizens of the country, including the integrated implementation of the principles and objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action.

On this day that marks the mid-point of the 20-year Cairo Programme of Action, it is gratifying to note that world leaders are reiterating their commitment to the principles and objectives agreed to in Cairo. I am pleased to inform you that His Excellency Mr. Bagabandi, President of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Elbegdorj, Prime Minister of Mongolia, and His Excellency Mr. Ochirbat, former President of Mongolia, signed the World Leaders Statement last week. Let us also reaffirm the centrality of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda to our wider efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Reproductive health, child labour, migration, unemployment, literacy, education and mortality rates are all indicative of the level of development in any society. Provision of a long, healthy and dignified life for the whole population should be the most basic aim of every plan for socio-economic development. In fact, a long, dignified and healthy life is one of the oldest and purest desires of mankind.

The Programme of Action that was adopted 10 years ago at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo is the actual embodiment of that desire. The Programme was designed, not only to address comprehensively a full range of population issues by presenting the necessary means of implementation, but also to help social justice prevail in the less fortunate parts of the global community through international cooperation for development.

With those basic and fundamental aspirations in mind we can only be proud to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, which has embarked on the path towards fulfilment of our noble goals in the realm of social and economic justice. Although by encountering so many challenges and opportunities, the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action has proved to be a complex and painstaking task in some critical areas, we now have a wealth of experience and knowledge that should be used to foster stronger progress towards accomplishing the ICPD objectives and achieving internationally agreed development goals.

The third Five-Year Development Plan of Iran is aimed at providing various developmental opportunities for all citizens, balanced geographical distribution of the population, better health and welfare for all people, protection of the environment, and promotion of the status of women as well as their participation in social, economic and political activities.

In addition, recognition by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, of the negative impact of rapid population growth along with concerted advocacy efforts and the establishment of one of the best primary health systems in the region, has reduced fertility rates by more than half in the last decade. Moreover, we have exceeded the targets laid out at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been closely involved in the development of Iran's family planning programme through enhancement of local and national ownership of the ICPD Programme of Action. UNFPA assistance complemented Government plans and programmes to promote reproductive health, and strengthened current population and reproductive health and family planning programmes. The funding available from UNFPA has been channelled towards testing innovative approaches as well as assisting in the systematic assessment of a limited number of reproductive health concerns that are of increasing importance to the population of Iran.

Let me bring my statement to a close by renewing my country's commitment to the Programme of Action, as well as expressing our profound gratitude to UNFPA for its earnest efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. As the lead agency, UNFPA plays a crucial role in helping to implement national policies in the area of sexual and reproductive health and in achieving the development goals and targets set out in the Millennium Declaration.

In order to successfully carry out its mandates in the context of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the subsequent processes, UNFPA should receive sufficient political and financial support. To prevent worsening of the population and reproductive health situation in many developing

countries, we call on the international community to meet the time-bound targets on resource mobilization for implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Attaining the target of $18.5 billion by 2005 is a challenge that the international community should rise up to meet.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 was a landmark event in the annals of population and development and the rights of women, because it marked a turning point in the way people looked at population issues.

The adoption of the Programme of Action, embodying a comprehensive population, reproductive health and development agenda spanning a period of 20 years, kindled hopes for the dawn of a new era of commitment and willingness on the part of Governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations and other concerned constituencies to integrate population concerns into all aspects of economic and social activity with a view to enhancing the quality of life for all and for posterity. Those aspirations were predicated on the expectation that the recommendations of the Conference would be translated into action, through practical policies and active resource mobilization, because without those components, the population, reproductive health, gender and other goals could not be met.

We stand on the threshold of the comprehensive review, scheduled for the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, of the progress made in the fulfilment of all the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and in the global partnership required for their achievement. In this context, it is pertinent to stress that population and reproductive health issues are central to development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of hunger and poverty. Those issues ought to be squarely addressed at the national as well as the international level.

In this connection, we in Ghana took a cue from the ICPD Programme of Action and revised our 1969 National Population Policy in 1994 to reflect the Cairo agenda to which our Government is firmly committed. Within this framework, new policies have been formulated in the areas of ageing, disability, gender, youth, adolescent reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections to guide implementation of the agenda. Besides our National Reproductive Health Policy, standards and protocols are also undergoing revision to take into account emerging concerns. All these are fully consistent with the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, the blueprint for the country's socio-economic development.

These policies are being translated into action through the implementation of programme activities, which include the adolescent reproductive health project under the African Youth Alliance, sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The project empowers adolescents between the ages of 10 and 24 years with relevant information about their own sexuality. Other strategies include behaviour change communication, employable skills development and youth-friendly services. Strong partnerships have been forged in this area with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth organizations, community-based and faith-based organizations.

With regard to HIV/AIDS and its acknowledged prevalence in parts of the country, prevention programmes have been intensified to reduce the spread of the epidemic. General awareness of HIV/AIDS is near universal, but behaviour change is still very slow. Consequently, through a national and multisectoral response to the epidemic, the capacity to implement and monitor HIV/AIDS programmes of district administrations, NGOs, traditional institutions, schools, the media, and others, has been strengthened. The focus has been on population groups such as youth, long distance drivers and commercial sex workers, and on areas such as stigmatization, discrimination, mother-to-child transmission, care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, and orphans, as well as voluntary counselling and testing, and lately, on treatment.

Within the context of health sector reform and to improve access to health care, particularly in poor and difficult-to-reach areas, trained community volunteers and community health nurses are working at the community level to provide primary health care, including reproductive health and family planning services. The quality of services has improved through the enhancement of the technical skills of health workers, the construction and rehabilitation of facilities and the provision of necessary equipment. A National Health Insurance Scheme, aimed at coping with the problem of providing affordable health care for all Ghanaians, was formally launched by the President of

Ghana on 18 March 2004. Our national efforts, however, are being hampered by the increasingly alarming rate at which the country is losing trained and qualified health personnel to some developed countries.

In view of the continued high levels of maternal fertility and mortality, particularly in the rural areas, the safe motherhood and family planning — life choices — programmes have been relaunched, and maternal health and death reporting has been intensified since 2002 to help determine the full extent of the incidence of maternal deaths.

The cumulative effect of these initiatives and others, such as the intensified campaign in favour of education for girls, is that there has been an appreciable decline in the total fertility rate, a decline in the infant mortality rate and an increase in the median age of mothers giving birth for the first time.

These limited gains ought to be viewed alongside the persistent challenge relating to the mobilization of adequate financial resources to fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action. In this regard, it should be pointed out that the Government's allocation of resources to population activities over the decade has seen a modest increase. Various Regional and district administrations have also started allocating resources to such activities in their annual budgets to ensure sustainability. In addition, the Government continues to mobilize external resources to complement its own efforts, and in this connection we are deeply grateful for the support of all our development partners.

I began my statement by stressing the primordial importance of financial resource mobilization for the success of the Programme of Action, and would like to conclude on that note. Though it is generally agreed that the decade following the adoption of the Programme of Action has been one of substantial success, the fact of the matter is that a lot still remains to be done, because most developing countries are nowhere near the targets that were set at the Cairo conference. The Conference goal of mobilizing $17 billion by the year 2000 was not met. Although the resources directed to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action have increased since 1994, they are not at the level required to implement the Cairo objectives.

As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the ICPD, individual Governments, as well as the international community as a whole, must resolve to strengthen the political will and commitment to fulfil the financial targets of the ICPD as an integral part of the collective effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and to mobilize new and additional resources in a sustained manner to fully implement the Programme of Action of the ICPD. In that regard, we also wish to appeal to the international community to increase its funding to the United Nations Population Fund to support the developing countries.

Mrs. Bauzán de Senes (Uruguay) *(spoke in Spanish)*: On the occasion of this commemoration, the Government of Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the principles, objectives and actions contained in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, as well as key measures to continue their implementation. That commitment is evidenced in the signing by the President of Uruguay of the Declaration of Principles by world leaders in support of the International Conference on Population and Development. The documents that emerged from the ICPD and ICPD+5 constitute the conceptual and ethical frame of reference through which our country is developing and implementing public policy in sexual and reproductive health.

For the past decade, Uruguay has had a complex population profile that requires the implementation of comprehensive action for the sustainable development and quality of life of the population. Growing and worsening poverty, which particularly affects children, adolescents and women, as well as economic migration, which causes a loss of qualified and young human resources, are factors that have worsened because of the very grave economic crisis suffered by my country in recent years, especially in 2002. Together with the ageing population, we are presented with the challenge of implementing comprehensive development policies.

Uruguay has made significant progress in the development of actions to protect and promote, without discrimination, the sexual and reproductive rights of people. In that work, we would like to underscore the joint efforts of governmental sectors, non-governmental organizations and international cooperation provided by the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). I would

like to convey my Government's appreciation to UNFPA Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, and to the Director of its Latin America and Caribbean Division, Ms. Marisela Padron, for the invaluable assistance that has been provided.

Among the most striking advances we can cite is the incorporation into public health services of free family planning services and the implementation of a comprehensive model of sexual and reproductive health in public health services. These actions are aimed at the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, and the establishment of separate health-care services for the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, thus promoting informed and responsible decisions. In that context, the great challenge remaining is for men of all ages to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights responsibly.

Important progress has also been made in the area of legislation. Laws on domestic and sexual violence, the definition of the crime of domestic violence and childbirth assistance, and the workers' protection law concerning gynaecologist screening are among the most important.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At the regional level, Uruguay recently approved the Santiago Declaration and the San Juan and Mexico consensus, which reflect the common position of Latin America and the Caribbean on the various issues of the Cairo agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action and which create important political impetus for meeting the challenges that still lie ahead.

We believe that in order to sustain the achievements made and to confront the challenges remaining, it is inevitably necessary to fulfil the commitments made at the national, regional and international levels. In that regard, while financial resources have increased slowly in recent years, annual contributions to the regular resources of the United Nations Population Fund have not matched the contributions received immediately following the Conference in 1994. With a 10-year perspective, we note that it was not possible to meet the Conference's objective of mobilizing $17 billion by the year 2000. If that trend is not reversed and if an attempt is not made to meet the objective of $18.5 billion set for 2005, we will not achieve the Conference's objectives, nor will we attain the Millennium Development Goals. The pledges made today by a number of developed countries restore our hope.

Assistance from donors is fundamental for achieving the objectives of the Conference. It is also essential that countries incorporate into their development policies the issues of population and poverty, reproductive rights and health, gender equity and equality and the empowerment of women.

We must recapture the momentum of Cairo. We must meet the challenge and come to the General Assembly's high-level event next year with the satisfaction of a duty fulfilled.

Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana): I have the pleasure to make this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative, who unfortunately is not able to present this statement in person.

Ten years ago, the international community convened at the great city of Cairo and adopted a milestone Programme of Action that has since become the blueprint for addressing the ever-challenging issues of population and development. In the Programme of Action, we set ourselves objectives, including sustained economic growth, universal education, gender equity and equality, reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality and universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health.

While not the first conference of its kind, the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) is significant in that it was held on the threshold of the process of globalization, and thus it constituted one of our collective responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by that new phenomenon. Together, we recognized the importance of the global population and, most fundamentally, the vital importance of population and development as the indispensable twin pillars of sustainable development in all our countries and societies. Thus, in the Cairo Programme of Action, we made an abiding commitment to make population and development an integral part of our national economic and social development strategies.

As we gather here today to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Cairo International Conference, we must answer critical questions on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

over the last 10 years. Have we fulfilled our commitments? If so, today we have cause to celebrate 10 years of progress. If not, and I am afraid that is the case, the 10-year commemoration offers us the opportunity and the challenge to identifying the constraints that have led to our failure and the new strategies we intend to deploy in order to meet our commitments.

In that regard, I share the disappointment expressed by many who spoke before me. Developing countries continue to face immense challenges and seemingly insurmountable constraints in implementing the commitments of the Programme of Action. It is disturbing that while developed countries have made tremendous progress in implementing the Programme of Action, the developing countries are still painfully far behind. Africa, in particular, is not only lagging; according to the data of most socio-economic indicators, the situation is actually worsening. Africa is the continent most afflicted by the scourge of HIV. Fifty per cent of the population lives in poverty. Maternal, infant and child mortality rates are also on the rise. And correspondingly, life expectancy at birth is declining dramatically. Sadly, to many in Africa and the developing world, the Programme of Action is yet to be realized.

If there is anything that the international community must understand and appreciate, it is that the asymmetry in resource allocation between the developed and the developing countries will always result in skewed development. In that regard, inadequate resources and lack of capacity, if not effectively addressed, will continue to undermine our ability to fully implement the Cairo Programme of Action and to realize the many other international development benchmarks that we have set ourselves to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

In the last 10 years, Botswana has taken concrete steps to implement the 1994 Programme of Action. In that regard, the formulation and subsequent implementation of our National Population Policy of 1997 constitutes one of our major achievements since the adoption of Programme of Action. The Policy addresses the issues of reproductive health, social development, gender, data collection and research, resource development and HIV/AIDS.

In 1996 Botswana adopted its national policy on women in development, which is aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. At the regional level, Botswana subscribed to the Southern African Development Community's Declaration on Gender and Development, and subsequently several national laws have been amended with the aim of giving greater protection to the rights of women.

In recognition of the importance of youth to national development, in 1996 Botswana adopted its National Youth Policy, which addresses the critical areas of unemployment, poverty, lack of opportunities, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and crime.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose a major threat to our development and survival as a nation. Botswana has the misfortune of being among the most affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with a high prevalence rate, especially among women between 15 and 49 years of age. Faced with that pandemic, Botswana has developed and implemented an aggressive programme to combat the scourge, which focuses on education, prevention, treatment and care.

With respect to reproductive health, Botswana has adopted and implemented several policies and strategies in line with the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action. They include the 2002 framework for implementation of adolescent sexual and reproductive health strategies, the 2002 national sexual and reproductive health programme, and the policy guidelines and service standards for sexual and reproductive health.

In spite of those achievements, Botswana faces immense challenges, arising mainly from the debilitating HIV/AIDS scourge. That pandemic has become the major impediment to the effective implementation of our national population policy. It has reversed the gains that Botswana had made in basic socio-economic indicators over the years. For example, life expectancy was reduced from 65.3 years in 1991 to 55.7 years in 2001. Poverty also remains a pressing challenge that deserves our continued attention. As of 2001, an estimated 36.6 per cent of Botswana's population was considered to be living in poverty.

In conclusion, we believe that the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development was a momentous event, and its Programme of Action is a visionary programme whose implementation must remain a matter of priority.

Ms. Nieto (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Ecuador, who unfortunately was unable to be present.

First, I wish to endorse the statement by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo, Ecuador reaffirms its commitment to implementation of the agreed Programme of Action and its goals and the recommendations of the five-year review of the Conference. That commitment is linked to Ecuador's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Assessments of the results achieved in Ecuador over the last decade are positive. Nonetheless, much remains to be done. In that connection, the sectors in which Ecuador has made progress are those of population and development, the empowerment of women, gender equality and reproductive rights and health. A national plan of action on population and a code on children and adolescents have been adopted. Outstanding results achieved include an increase in life expectancy at birth, an increase in the average number of years of education of those 24 years and older, and a reduction of the infant mortality rate, the overall fertility rate and the illiteracy rate among the general population.

Ecuador is thankful for all assistance provided by the United Nations system, in particular by the United Nations Population Fund and its office in my country.

In 2000 Ecuador suffered a profound economic crisis, which led to a social crisis. The levels of poverty and extreme poverty worsened, as did indicators for unemployment and underemployment. One of the obvious consequences of the crisis was the sustained and growing number of Ecuadorian emigrants that decided to leave the country in search of a more encouraging future. We will follow all efforts to resolve the complex problem of migration.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region of the world with the most disturbing levels of inequality, and Ecuador is no exception. This problem must be tackled in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

Likewise, we are concerned that countries are often pressured to fulfil their commitments in paying their foreign debt and must postpone decisions for the development of their population. In order to move towards development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, Ecuador calls for consideration of the burden involved in paying debt and debt servicing.

Another fundamental point is the need for adequate financing. The international community must be aware that it is essential to support our countries in this regard. Compliance with the Monterrey Consensus is one way to do that.

Ecuador reaffirms that it will continue to make all necessary efforts in order to make progress in all international commitments and will achieve positive results at the national level. I wish to congratulate Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, and Ms. Marisela Padrón, Director of the Fund's Latin American and Caribbean Division, for their leadership and dedication in making progress on all the aforementioned objectives.

Ecuador is convinced that it will continue to have the support of bodies such as the Fund, as we have said, in order to make progress on all objectives.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development provides us with an opportunity to assess the efforts that have been carried out in this area and to reaffirm the commitments that we undertook in Cairo.

The grave crisis that affected my country, the Argentine Republic, at the end of 2001 gave further impetus to promoting active policies for the country's development and economic growth, the creation of new jobs and a better and more fair distribution of income, leading to the creation of opportunities through access to work, education, health and housing — in other words, the promotion of social progress.

Social policy in Argentina is based on a network focused on the Argentine individual and family. Its action incorporates the provinces, towns, civil society organizations and the private sector. That strategy of participation ensures a concrete response to needs and makes it possible to create sustainable projects through partnerships of responsible management.

In Argentina there are three national plans: on food security, social development and social economy, and the family. The priority of all three plans are men

and women in vulnerable sectors, and the plans give special attention to disabled persons and indigenous communities.

It should be pointed out that the reform of the Argentine Constitution adopted in 1994 gave constitutional priority to international human rights instruments, including the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In that context, the right to education is guaranteed to all citizens, without any gender discrimination. 49 per cent of all primary school students in Argentina are female. At the middle school level, 53.2 per cent are female.

With regard to sexual and reproductive health, in October 2002, a law on sexual health and responsible parenthood was adopted. In March 2003, a national programme for sexual health and responsible parenthood was drawn up. Both instruments are milestones with regard to public policy and involve a clear commitment to the basic human rights of the population in general, and women in particular.

The 2002 law establishes that sexual and reproductive rights form an integral part of human rights and that the exercise of those rights is essential for the full development of women and men.

The new public policies in the field of health also work in synergy with other aspects of human development and constitute an important tool for reducing maternal mortality, for improving access to health care for women and children, and for working towards the Millennium Development Goal of promoting gender equality and strengthening the capacities of women.

In connection with the provisions of the Cairo Programme of Action on gender equality and the empowerment of women, we want to point out that, inter alia, we have enacted a law on birthing rights and a law for protection against family violence; we have incorporated into Argentine law the provisions of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women; we have enacted a law amending the penal code on crimes against sexual integrity, an amendment to the benefits regime for families, and other very important norms.

In the area of immigration, in January 2004, Argentina enacted a new immigration law that, throughout the country, will ensure equal access by immigrants and their families to the same protections, assistance and rights as nationals enjoy, and in particular regarding social services, public infrastructure and so forth. Irregular status as a migrant does not prevent access by a migrant to the educational system or to health care.

The Millennium Development Goal to promote gender equality and to empower women, as well as the Cairo Programme of Action and key actions adopted in Beijing and Cairo, have been taken into account in the design of the human rights dimensions of our foreign policy. In that context, we reiterate the commitments undertaken at the thirtieth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and we reaffirm our will to continue policies to promote gender equity, education and health.

Argentina associates itself with the action being undertaken by the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the associated countries, Bolivia, Peru and Chile. We share a common position on population and development based on the Cairo Programme of Action.

The major conferences in the economic and social field, including the Cairo Conference, gave us the hope that a united international effort would confront the major challenges of development and poverty. It is our hope that this commemoration of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development will serve to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to continue to work to meet the, as yet unresolved, challenges of poverty and underdevelopment.

Mrs. Løj (Denmark): Denmark fully aligns itself with the statement made by Netherlands on behalf of the European Union.

On this important day of the commemoration of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that took place in Cairo in 1994, it is with great satisfaction that I acknowledge the continued support for and commitment to the ICPD

Programme of Action that has been expressed time and time again throughout the day and evening. The implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is a high priority for my Government. It is also an agenda that I am personally strongly committed to, as a woman and a representative of my Government at the Cairo Conference.

The tenth anniversary of ICPD this year has, among other things, been used to take stock and determine the status of the results achieved so far. Since the adoption of the ICPD Programme of Action in 1994, important achievements have been made in improving reproductive health in many countries. However, other countries have witnessed no progress — or even setbacks. The numbers and statistics speak for themselves.

We have come far, but not nearly far enough. Special focus is needed on gender issues and adolescents, as we cannot afford to lose that enormous human potential for development. And special focus is needed on HIV/AIDS, because of its debilitating impact on the eradication of poverty.

We must continue to seek ways and means to move the Cairo Programme of Action forward. Political leadership is needed. It will require continued and increased willingness to address openly some of the sensitive issues and to make this a political priority. That includes allocating increased financial and human resources. And the resources must come from national Governments as well as the international community.

We have recently strengthened the Danish development assistance programme in the area of health — especially reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. We have done it bilaterally, through new health sector programmes and increased mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS. And we have done it multilaterally, through increased contributions.

Let me underline the importance of continuing the important task of turning the Cairo commitments into action. Respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and adequate reproductive health care and services are indispensable elements in the fight against poverty and thus in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. I can assure you that Denmark will stay committed to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, and we can only urge all Member States to do the same.

In this respect, the role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) will continue to be crucial if we are going to turn the Cairo commitments into reality.

I would also like to conclude by assuring UNFPA and its able and dedicated Executive Director, of the continued support of the Government of Denmark to the work ahead of us.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): Guyana associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Qatar, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Barbados on behalf of CARICOM member States.

In the words of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), "People are the most important and valuable resource of any nation." Indeed, the eradication of poverty and the achievement of economic and social progress rest critically on the empowerment of people and the creation of opportunities for the fullest realization of their potential.

Our gathering here today on the tenth anniversary of ICPD marks a renewed recognition of the centrality of people in development.

The Government of Guyana remains firmly committed to the full and effective implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. In signing the World Leaders Statement in support of the ICPD, the President of Guyana, His Excellency Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, signified that my country's commitment to the Programme of Action extends to the very highest levels of our Government.

Since the Cairo agenda was adopted in 1994, significant advances have been made in its implementation. We are encouraged by the progress made in reducing infant mortality, promoting gender equality and women's rights and securing universal access to education, particularly as it relates to the girl child.

At the national level, over the past decade my Government has made sustained efforts to improve the quality of life of all Guyanese through increased investment in education, health, housing and the provision of other basic social services. We have taken definitive measures to further promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, including through the Domestic Violence Act of 1996, which provides a legal

framework of rights and protections against violence and exploitation.

More recently, the establishment of several constitutional commissions — on human rights, ethnic relations, women and gender equity, indigenous peoples and the rights of the child, respectively — has been part of a concerted national effort to assure the fullest enjoyment of rights and freedoms by all segments of our population.

Notwithstanding the achievements made so far, many challenges remain at both the national and the global levels. HIV/AIDS continues to exact an astronomical human cost in many countries and societies. Regrettably, Guyana has not been spared the ravages of that pandemic. Particularly disturbing is its prevalence among our young people: the majority of our present and future workers and leaders.

My Government is determined to overcome the threat posed by HIV/AIDS, and we are grateful for the support provided by friendly Governments, the United Nations system and the wider international community. Our actions are focused on education and awareness-raising as part of an integrated approach to prevention, treatment and care, coupled with efforts to eliminate the stigmatization of and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

We must also acknowledge that, globally, many women still do not enjoy all of their human rights and fundamental freedoms and are thus deprived of the opportunity to contribute fully to the development of their societies. Much more remains to be done to enhance the status of women and children at all levels and to ensure that their rights are fully respected. Progress in reducing maternal and child mortality and strengthening basic health systems and programmes, including reproductive and sexual health programmes, needs to be accelerated. My Government remains committed to those objectives and is working in active partnership with the private sector and civil society to ensure the delivery of services to our people.

My delegation wishes to note further that the loss of human resources through migration continues to hamper the achievement of national development objectives in developing countries such as my own. Guyana endorses the view that migration has become a major issue of concern for the international community. We support a comprehensive examination of the question under the aegis of the United Nations and look forward to the report of the Global Commission on International Migration, and to the United Nations high-level dialogue on migration to be held in 2006.

Finally, it must be observed that resource provisions remain significantly below actual requirements to achieve the Cairo goals and those contained in the Millennium Declaration. Those goals cannot be met by the actions of Governments alone, much less by the actions of Governments in developing countries. International cooperation remains indispensable. The need to engage all actors in both the public and the private sectors has never been greater.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as the lead United Nations agency in the follow-up and implementation of the Cairo agenda, deserves the fullest support of the international community in its efforts to improve the lives of people everywhere.

Mr. Mojarro (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly and to express our appreciation to the United Nations and to Ms. Thoraya Obaid of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for their support for this commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

In Mexico, the challenge of implementing the agreements and recommendations of the ICPD has been met jointly by society and the Government. Cooperation between Government institutions and civil society organizations is expressed through opening institutional spaces for dialogue and a rich and broad variety of forms of cooperation beneficial to both sides.

Mexico's recent report on implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action from 1994 to 2003 describes that cooperation and the goals that have been accomplished. Our Government agrees with the Cairo consensus in placing at the core of its concerns a broadening of individuals' capacities and opportunities, the full exercise of human rights, including rights relating to sexuality and reproduction, improving reproductive health, eliminating gender and generational inequalities, and eliminating poverty.

The Mexican Government views reproductive health as an essential and indispensable component of human development and of the enjoyment of many other rights of citizens. As the result of efforts made in

recent years, it is estimated that between 1994 and 2003, the percentage of our population with access to prenatal care rose from 89 per cent to 96 per cent. Contraceptive use rose from 65 to 73 per cent during the same period, the number of deliveries under medical care rose from 7 to more than 9 out of 10, and fertility is now near the replacement rate. Nonetheless, we must continue our strategy in order to reduce maternal mortality even further.

Our Government's commitment to Mexican women is expressed in the formulation of the national programme for women in 1996 and the establishment in 2001 of the National Institute for Women. Through those mechanisms, we are promoting the concerted and coordinated participation of all Government sectors for the advancement of women and to mainstream the gender perspective.

Over the past 10 years, greater equity has been achieved in access to education, health and employment opportunities, in the establishment of good legal frameworks to ensure the full exercise of the human rights of women and the improvement of the status of women within the family.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that there is still inequality in gender relations, particularly in those groups that lag the furthest behind, such as the indigenous population. It is therefore necessary to continue to promote the participation of women in all economic and social spheres, in the decision-making process and in the equitable distribution of power.

Our country is confronting the enormous challenge of overcoming profound social inequalities that endanger the lives of millions of Mexicans. In order to ensure that persons fully exercise their reproductive rights, it is vital to continue to broaden programmes against poverty, exclusion and marginalization.

Mexico's Opportunities Programme seeks, through educational, nutritional and health support, to offset the poverty of 4.2 million families. The impact has been a significant reduction of extreme poverty by 16 per cent in just two years. The Mexican Government attaches high priority to our unusually large population of adolescents and young people. To meet the needs of adolescents, we have promoted health-care programmes designed specifically for them and have substantially broadened their access to information, education, advice and sexual and reproductive health services.

In particular, we emphasize our grant programme, which has benefited 4.6 million students, so that they do not leave school because of financial reasons. The programmes promote the broadening of skills and development choices, so that young people will have alternatives to early marriage, motherhood and fatherhood.

Despite that progress, the problems in this sector are still enormous. The emergence of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS requires that the Government redouble its efforts and promote greater participation by all of those who play a relevant role in the development of youth.

With regard to immigration and in accordance with the recommendations of the ICPD, the Government of Mexico has committed itself to building a nation that offers equal opportunities to its inhabitants so that they will not have to leave the country to seek them elsewhere. That is also in accordance with the structuring of concerted migration policies within the United Nations system and the inter-American system and with neighbouring countries to ensure respect for the rights of migrants and facilitate their incorporation in development.

There are achievements to be celebrated at this tenth anniversary of the ICPD. But we also recognize that not all the goals have been met. We need innovative and effective strategies, such as South-South cooperation and strong support from UNFPA, that are agreed to and respected by States, that maximize the benefits and reduce the harmful effects of economic globalization and that acknowledge and are consistent with those demographic characteristics. Only in that manner will we be able to guarantee the human rights of all peoples of all ages and thus achieve the objectives of the ICPD by 2015 and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The Mexican Government again reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and to the key measures and the resolution adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in July this year, so that we can continue to progress in shaping an international agenda that makes it possible, in a timely and efficient way, to deal with

all of the problems affecting us, and the complex new challenges confronting our countries.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): Ten years ago in Cairo the international community universally recognized the link between population and development. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) set out as benchmark goals achieving universal education, reducing child and maternal mortality, empowering women, ensuring universal access to reproductive health care and preventing sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Today, it is obvious that this link lies at the heart of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As we are approaching the first review of the Millennium Declaration in 2005, today's meeting offers a timely opportunity to take the first steps towards a global assessment of the progress made, identify the challenges ahead and elaborate measures to overcome the remaining obstacles.

Armenia believes that effective implementation of the development agenda requires first and foremost strong national ownership, including the active involvement of civil society. At the same time, given the magnitude of the problem, international cooperation and the support of the international community are essential for the successful completion of national strategies.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my Government's sincere appreciation to all donor Governments and international organizations that have provided both expertise and financial assistance to various programmes implemented in Armenia.

At the time of the Cairo Conference Armenia was undergoing a significant political transformation, which entailed a major economic crisis and resulted in increased poverty, demographic decline and migration. We are proud that, due to political and economic reforms, we were able to reverse the trend and register some progress, including in the areas of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Notwithstanding some decline in the general quality of education, the country enjoys almost universal literacy, with no gender disparity among students.

In October 2001, Armenia, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other donors, conducted its first national census after its independence. The data has been used in the designing of economic and social policies of the country.

In order to promote empowerment of women, the national mechanism on the advancement of women was established in Armenia in 2002, and the National Plan of Action on the Improvement of the Status of Women was adopted earlier this year.

True empowerment of women is impossible without enabling them to make informed decisions on reproductive health and family planning issues. The National Reproductive Health Programme was developed as early as 1995 and consists of three components: family planning, prenatal services and reproductive health education for young people. The UNFPA has been instrumental in the implementation of the programme. Successful travelling-doctor projects were introduced in several regions, making those services available in remote rural areas. As a result of those policies, there has been some reduction in maternal and infant and child mortality rates.

In December 2002, Armenia adopted the Law on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights, which is based on ICPD principles and establishes a legal framework for their effective implementation in the country. It also requires introduction of reproductive health education in all public schools. The currently low level of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Armenia provides an opportunity for early targeted intervention to prevent further spread of the disease. The National Strategic Programme to combat HIV/AIDS was launched in 2002 in close partnership with the United Nations country team.

While we are pleased with the progress made, we also realize that much needs to be done to achieve a prosperous society and the well-being of its individual citizens.

Problems of refugees — resulting from the ethnic cleansing of the entire Armenian population in Azerbaijan, meticulously planned and systematically executed by its authorities in Sumgait, Kirovabad and Baku, starting in 1988 and continuing in 1990 and 1991 — and problems of internally displaced persons, which constitute about 14 per cent of the population, require particular attention. The Government has

adopted the policy of integrating those people into society. In 1996, the National Assembly passed the Law on Refugees, which gives them the right to acquire Armenian citizenship. Also, the Government is undertaking measures to provide special socio-economic assistance.

Migration, which reached rather high levels in the 1990s, is another area of concern. In response, the Government adopted the concept of State regulation of migration in November 2000. It is encouraging that the recent improvement of the economic situation has halted the migration flows.

Poverty eradication as a key to the solution of many socio-economic problems faced by the country is among the major priorities of the Government. To that end, the Poverty Reduction Strategic Programme was adopted in 2003, covering, inter alia, various ICPD related issues.

Full implementation of the Cairo Consensus, which affirmed a people-centred approach to development, is essential for achieving human progress and ensuring human rights and dignity for all. The Government of Armenia is committed to continuing its efforts to implement those goals and to work constructively with all interested stakeholders.

Mr. Al-Habsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I have the honour to express our thanks and appreciation to the members of the Commission on Population and Development and to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for their constructive efforts, which have helped to strengthen international efforts to implement the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). I would also like to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Despite the fact that 10 years have passed since the holding of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, international progress to improve national population projects and to integrate them into development strategies has not met our expectations. That is particularly so in developing countries, where millions of people suffer from the impact of armed conflict, poverty, disease and illiteracy. Those people lack the most basic of services, including housing, health care, education and other appropriate social services.

The continuation of such a discouraging state of affairs half way to 2014 is a reflection of the failure to implement the outcome of the Conference, in particular with regard to allocating $18.5 billion by 2005 for population projects in developing countries. Doing that would require political will on the part of developed and donor countries to meet their commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to official development assistance, thereby making it possible for poor countries to rehabilitate their financial, development, economic and social infrastructure. That would help them to develop local institutional capacities and to remove the obstacles preventing them from integrating population concerns into their national development plans and strategies.

On the instructions of His Royal Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, our head of State, the Government of the United Arab Emirates has placed human development and population issues at the top of its concerns. We have promulgated the appropriate legislation in that regard and have budgeted the funds necessary to ensure that citizens receive the best care and that they are protected and nurtured in their development, thus enabling them to become more involved in the implementation of national development plans on the basis of decentralization and cooperation among federal institutions, local governments, the private sector and other concerned stakeholders.

Our country has also adopted national development policies aimed at achieving justice and social security for its citizens. Those include an initiative begun in 1999, in cooperation with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, to implement a comprehensive health strategy that will cover the period through 2010. The goal of that strategy is to provide the best possible health care for citizens, thereby contributing to decreasing mortality rates and disease, especially among women and children.

The United Arab Emirates has also implemented numerous strategies to promote social services. Those strategies, which were developed in cooperation with United Nations experts, include improving the care provided to children, women, families, persons with special needs, the disabled and the elderly. We have also adopted an integrated social security policy to ensure a broad safety net of assistance for eligible needy and afflicted persons. That has contributed to

ensuring psychological stability and public security among the population.

Our country has implemented an advanced strategy aimed at providing free primary, secondary and higher education for its citizens and including literacy and adult education programmes. The result has been a significant qualitative change in the way people utilize developments in technology. In addition, we have set up vocational, technical and technological training centres to develop the skills of young people, including women, who have recently been playing a prominent role in national development strategies and programmes. That role has served to better integrate women into local public and private labour markets and volunteer work, thereby helping them to serve their communities on the basis of equal opportunity with men.

We believe that population concerns can only be addressed in the framework of the comprehensive development of our populations, and we have begun to build model cities, villages and other human settlements in which people enjoy high levels of municipal services and appropriate housing that is equipped with all the necessary facilities and services. We have also carried out many important projects to improve living conditions in rural and outlying areas, to build public housing for Bedouins and to provide state-of-the-art services in the areas of drinking water, electricity, communications and transport. We have also expanded our agricultural, grazing, animal husbandry and fisheries capacities. We have implemented many reforestation and environmental projects and have built new recreation and tourism facilities.

In conclusion, we continue to be concerned about the ongoing population increase, the low level of economic growth and the heavy debt burden which continue to impede the efforts of many developing countries. We call for the promotion of international cooperation, in particular with regard to the mobilization of bilateral and multilateral resources, with a view to achieving the desired goals of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. In that regard, we would also like to underscore the need to respect the sovereign rights, national laws and development priorities of every State, including full respect for the religious and cultural specificities of each country, in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards.

Mrs. Vargas de Acosta (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): As it did 10 years ago, the Republic of Honduras today reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action adopted in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development. The Cairo consensus resolutely established the close link that exists between population strategies and the reduction of poverty, thereby changing the world's perspective and emphasizing the need to take concrete measures, not only globally but also, and in particular, at the national level.

Working in close cooperation with civil society and in full respect for the diverse religious, ethical and cultural values of our people and internationally recognized human rights, the Government of Honduras has established a legal and institutional framework that reflects our development priorities. From the very outset, the current Government of Honduras has endeavoured to implement that legal and institutional framework in order to improve the lives of Honduran men, women and children.

In 2002, the national women's policy was made State policy. The poverty-reduction strategy of the Government of Honduras, which was developed with the active participation of civil society in order to reach the Millennium Development Goals, attaches high priority to reducing maternal and infant mortality, preventing HIV/AIDS and narrowing the gender gap.

The President returned to the Chair.

In 1999, Honduras emphatically reaffirmed its support for the Cairo consensus and adopted the necessary measures to continue to implement the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development agreed at the five-year review of the implementation of the Programme.

During this, the year of the tenth anniversary of the holding of the Conference, the Government of Honduras has been participating at a high level in the entire process of evaluating the implementation of the consensus. In that context, we have joined the unanimous voice of the entire American hemisphere expressed in the Santiago Declaration of the Americas to reaffirm our commitment to the Cairo consensus.

Given the impact that progress on population issues has on the development of our country, we believe this to be a crucial moment to evaluate the achievements made and to strengthen international commitment with regard to implementing the goals set out at Cairo. After 10 years, we can say with confidence that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals depends upon our following the guidelines established in the Cairo consensus, while keeping our sights on the needs and rights of individuals and seeking to create the necessary alliances to achieve that fundamental objective.

We believe it appropriate on this occasion to express our appreciation to the United Nations system and to underscore the proactive role being played by the United Nations Population Fund in the implementation of the Cairo consensus. The Government of Honduras, which I am proud to represent, reaffirms its commitment to continue to fight to achieve the goals set out at Cairo for the well-being of all the men and women of Honduras.

Miss Lohpechra (Thailand): My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I would like to extend my best wishes to you, Sir, and to congratulate you on the holding of this important event to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). I also appreciate the fruitful discussion that took place on Tuesday during the round table on the theme "International migration and development: the challenges ahead", which was organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

With regard to the issue of migration and development, Thailand wishes to commend the United Nations and the Government of Switzerland for the progress made in the work of the Global Commission on International Migration and the Berne Initiative, in both of which migration and development are the subject of ongoing discussions. Such dialogue and practical cooperation have the potential to increase mutual understanding on the nature, causes and impacts of international migration and its relationship to development. We pledge our full cooperation to the United Nations and all other partner agencies in managing migration for the benefit of all.

Thailand attaches great importance to the implementation of the Programme of Action that was the product of the International Conference on Population and Development, which was held in Cairo in 1994. According to Thailand's first report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was officially launched in June of this year, poverty in Thailand has been reduced by two thirds since 1990. The number of underweight children has fallen by nearly half. Malaria is no longer a problem in most parts of the country. Annual rates of new HIV infections have been reduced by over 80 per cent since 1991, the peak of the epidemic. Gender disparity in primary and secondary education has been eliminated. Universal access to primary school education is likely to be achieved within a few years. Progress is also being made in reaching maternal- and child-health targets.

With regard to the issue of HIV/AIDS, Thailand began to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS in the early 1990s, and we were among the very first countries to meet the MDG target in that regard. Annual rates of new infections have fallen dramatically, from an estimated 143,000 new infections in 1991 to about 19,000 in 2003. Nevertheless, the pandemic still poses a major threat to the country. In that regard, we hope to shift HIV-prevention efforts to devote more attention to the vulnerability of young people in general. At the same time, effective prevention efforts should also target other specific vulnerable groups, such as mobile workers and injecting drug users.

In July this year, Thailand had the honour to host the XV International AIDS Conference and the second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Meeting on HIV/AIDS. Those events have contributed to strengthening international cooperation in addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS, particularly through strong and renewed political commitment and leadership.

Our progress in the area of development and in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action can be attributed to a number of factors, such as national harmony, sound public policy, democratic governance, rapid economic expansion, public investment in social services and advantageous historical and geopolitical circumstances. Extensive rural development programmes undertaken by governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations in Thailand have also resulted in overall progress in reducing poverty.

improving nutrition and meeting the basic human needs of the Thai people.

Thailand is now in the unique position of being able to contribute to the global partnership for development. Through our experiences, knowledge and mistakes, Thailand believes that it can make a significant contribution to international efforts to meet the development goals internationally agreed at the ICPD. We trust that we can be an important partner in development initiatives for other developing countries, as well as within the United Nations system, by offering development cooperation and taking part in subregional and regional cooperation initiatives.

In that regard, South-South cooperation should be promoted and further strengthened in a number of key areas, including those of reproductive health, child and maternal health, education and gender equality, as identified by the Programme of Action. Thailand would be pleased and ready to contribute to such an endeavour. We would also like to encourage UNFPA to enhance its technical cooperation activities through a Thailand-UNFPA partnership to assist developing countries in the greater Mekong subregion in various areas of population and development.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): It has been 10 years since the International Conference on Population and Development took place in Cairo. The consensus on a full range of issues — from the need to ensure gender equality, reproductive health and rights, information and education for young people, measures to prevent HIV/AIDS and fight violence against women, to steps to protect the environment — reflects the commitment and the resolve of the nations of the world to place a new focus on population-related policies and activities. That also means a focus on quality of services, on quality of life and on sustainable human development. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference has been universally recognized as a landmark document that has governed our actions over the past decade.

Today's commemorative meeting is indeed a valuable opportunity for us to look back at the process of its implementation with a view to mapping out a suitable course for further action. As we do so, we find strong encouragement in the statement by world leaders issued just yesterday.

We note with pleasure that in many countries, both the Government and non-governmental entities have been making vigorous and coordinated efforts to carry out the ICPD's Programme of Action. Meaningful achievements have been recorded during the past 10 years, as reported by United Nations Population Fund. A reduction in the global birth rate, coupled with a decline in the maternal mortality rate and an increase in life expectancy, is a notable example of the humanitarian nature and the sustainability of the new approach.

However, I would like to echo what Ms. Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, stated this morning before the General Assembly — that, while we must celebrate our achievements, we must also be realistic. She pointed to key challenges facing us. Perhaps, among those key issues, the most vital is to ensure that we can reach all people in need of assistance.

While progress has been encouraging globally, when we look at individual countries, we see that progress has been uneven. Many developing countries, especially those in Africa, continue to face serious difficulties and challenges in implementing their national programmes. A lack of funds is the most common problem. New and deadly diseases are emerging, while the HIV/AIDS pandemic is showing no sign of abating. That situation is hindering the efforts of many countries to achieve the goals of not only their population programmes but also of their hunger eradication and poverty reduction plans, thus making the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) even more remote.

In that connection, Viet Nam shares the concern of the Group of 77 and China over the failure to meet the target of mobilizing $17 billion for population activities, and over the challenge of reaching $18.5 billion by 2005. We hope that, following this meeting, renewed efforts will be made to realize the commitment by developed countries to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance, thus helping developing countries to overcome a major obstacle in their implementation of the ICPD's Programme of Action.

In Viet Nam, population activities are being undertaken within the framework of our overall Ten-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy, which runs until 2010 and which combines economic development with social progress. The Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on

Population and Development fits well into our socio-economic development strategy. In carrying out our population activities, we are coordinating our activities closely with United Nations agencies, especially the United Nations Population Fund, within the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance (UNDAF).

We are also receiving valuable support and assistance from domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Viet Nam has been recognized as one of the most successful countries in the area of population activities, and in 1999 we received the United Nations Population Award. On this occasion, on behalf on my Government, I wish to convey to all our friends and partners our most sincere gratitude. We look to working with all of them in the context of further action to implement the ICPD's Programme of Action and achieve the MDGs.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): Allow me to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I would like also to congratulate the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly on their election.

I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, and to the staff of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for having made the necessary arrangements for the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

I would also like to associate myself with the statement made this morning by the delegation of the State of Qatar, on behalf of the Group of 77.

Educated, healthy and skilled human resources and small and happy families constitute the bedrock of sustainable development. Ten years have elapsed since the international community adopted the Programme of Action of the ICPD — a 20-year blueprint for the international community to accelerate socio-economic development through better population management and to fight poverty by ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights for all by 2015.

The high population growth rate has had an adverse impact on the utilization of resources for development and on the generation of employment opportunities. That remains a major challenge to most of the least-developed countries in terms of their national development efforts. My own country is no exception.

Nepal attaches great importance to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, which it considers to be a global framework for reinforcing gender equality and human development. We believe that the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the ICPD provides a good opportunity to connect this event with next year's comprehensive appraisal of the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Nepal has undertaken various measures to implement the commitments made in the Cairo Declaration of the ICPD. We have adopted a national population policy to increase the quality of the population, reduce the population growth rate and regulate migration. In 1995, His Majesty's Government established a separate Ministry of Population and Environment to lead and coordinate population- and environment-related activities as well as to develop and monitor a national policy for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The ninth (1997-2002) and, currently, the tenth (2002-2007) five-year development plans have integrated population dynamics into development planning.

Nepal has focused, among other things, on increasing income-generating activities and improving the status of women, as well as fostering easy access to basic education and to reproductive health and family-planning services. We have achieved some progress in lowering the population growth rate, the infant mortality rate, the maternal mortality rate and the total fertility rate. The contraceptive-use rate, life expectancy and the literacy rate all have increased. Nepal's long-term objective is to bring down the total fertility rate to the replacement level in 20 years by ensuring qualitative family planning and maternal and child health services, as well as encouraging couples to have a two-child family.

We are of the view that the Cairo Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals are mutually reinforcing and that their coordinated implementation is important. We believe that investment in education and public health contributes to poverty alleviation and employment generation.

Hence, my delegation supports the idea of an integrated approach to population and development.

The latest statistics reveal that some 38 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. The pandemic is spreading, and every year about 5 million new infections occur around the world. Many people in Nepal have also been infected by this illness. Many countries have begun to witness a large number of their young people being decimated by the disease and their development gains being reversed. To change that, the global community will have to redouble its efforts and seek new patterns of partnerships for better synergy.

Nepal supports efforts to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young people and expand their access to information and services for preventing infection. We urge the international community to take serious measures to provide access to antiretroviral therapy for people in developing countries suffering from HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Much has changed since 1994. Indeed, some progress has been made in reducing poverty, promoting gender equality, bringing down population growth rates and containing HIV/AIDS in several developing countries. The active partnership between Governments and civil society has been one of the factors contributing to that progress. However, there is no room for complacency. Millions of people in various parts of the world are still suffering from poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and diseases such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The international community still faces the daunting challenge of attaining the goals of the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals. Developing countries, particularly least developed countries, face resource and technological constraints in accelerating their national development goals.

Nepal is confident that through our collective efforts and international cooperation, we will be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the ICPD.

Mr. Solórzano (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for presiding so capably over this important meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of one of the most important and valuable universal consensuses achieved in the area of population and development for our societies.

On behalf of my delegation, I express my thanks for the United Nations Population Fund's valuable cooperation for the development of my country and the generous solidarity the Fund has extended to us over the last 10 years. During this period, our country has made significant advances in the area of policies and norms for population and development. They include the national development plan, which implements the Programme of Action of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), principally through the analysis of the links between population dynamics, population mobility — internal and international migration — education of women, sexual and reproductive health and education of our society.

In that regard, it should be stressed that to make great progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals requires a profound commitment to attain better levels of development in our country with respect to the quality of life, which encompasses health, education and opportunities, which are key factors in sustainable human development.

I am pleased to say on this occasion that Nicaragua confirms the Programme of Action and considers it a valuable tool to combat poverty. We also reiterate the specific reservations expressed by the Nicaraguan delegation in Cairo in 1994 with respect to the Programme of Action consensus adopted at the ICPD and with respect to the priorities underlined at the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, in 1999, to review the Conference's goals — the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development known as ICPD+5.

Nicaragua reaffirms its unqualified respect for the right to life from the moment of conception. For that reason, abortion or the interruption of pregnancy can in no circumstances be treated as a means of controlling fertility or as a means of birth control, as stated in the ICPD Programme of Action. The Government of Nicaragua accepts the concepts of reproductive rights and reproductive health and considers that abortion is not a component of those rights.

Finally, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to continue supporting the work of the United Nations Population Fund because we recognize the importance of the services it provides for the development of countries that request its assistance and experience in the field of population and development. We know that a great deal remains for us to do, especially with

respect to our country's high population growth rate. That is why we are committed to continuing actions undertaken and making those efforts enduring. In that context, we are fully confident that we will have the needed, generous international cooperation, which we fully appreciate.

Mr. Tesfu (Ethiopia): I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for their introductory remarks on the issue. Ethiopia also associates itself with the statement presented by the representative of Qatar on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Today we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), convened in Cairo. The Conference concluded with a landmark document, a 20-year Programme of Action on Population and Development, adopted by consensus by all participating countries. The Programme of Action is a vital mechanism that clearly emphasizes the links between population and development. It also shows how countries should fulfil the needs of their citizens by improving their socio-economic policies.

We recall the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly — the five-year review of the ICPD — convened by the United Nations in 1999 to review progress made towards meeting the ICPD goals. After reviewing the topics highlighted in the Programme of Action, the Assembly agreed on a new set of benchmarks in four areas: education and literacy, reproductive health care and the need for contraception, maternal mortality reduction and HIV/AIDS.

We should use the occasion of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of ICPD to help and assist countries in analysing how we are discharging our responsibilities in implementing the Programme of Action with a view to transforming the lives of our fellow citizens. In view of next year's planned summit to review implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the present meeting of commemoration should be an opportunity to examine the contribution of the ICPD Programme of Action towards achieving those Goals.

As outlined in the UNFPA global survey on national experiences, it is evident that many countries may fall short of achieving the agreed goals and commitments of the Programme of Action. That shortfall is more acute in poor and developing countries.

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, cognizant of the effects of population pressure on the country's economic development, adopted a national population policy in 1993. Periodic reviews have been conducted every year to assess the implementation process and facilitate the exchange of experiences at the national level. The findings of those reviews indicate that policy implementation is lagging because of the capacity constraints on officials at all levels. To solve that problem, it is important to have assistance from Governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations for capacity-building programmes.

We believe that international development partnerships are important for successfully implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. Although we understand that the successful implementation and the achievement of the Programme of Action requires the political commitment of all countries, the support of developed countries is a very important factor in complementing the efforts being undertaken by developing countries.

We also believe that developing countries should assist one another in this field by exchanging experiences at the regional level in a spirit of South-South cooperation. Finally, it is our hope to see our people with improved qualities of life by the end of twentieth year of the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, I express my Government's appreciation for UNFPA's support to my country.

Mr. Tsereteli (Georgia): I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations, and in particular to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) — Ms. Thoraya Obaid and her team — for the opportunity to participate in this high-level forum. The issues that we have been discussing are of vital importance to all States and nations.

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) brought about a fundamental change in the current understanding of population issues. The Programme of Action for the next 20 years covered specific objectives for all

countries in the areas of health, the status of women and social development.

The Conference was especially important for countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union. These countries began their independent development guided by the principles of the ICPD. With regard to Georgia, the ICPD targets have been highlighted in all our national development instruments. As noted by the Secretary-General, the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular those having to do with the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not addressed.

In implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, Georgia is taking positive steps to reduce poverty and to reach the Millennium Development Goals. The assistance of donor countries and of United Nations organizations — and in particular that of UNFPA's programmes — is playing a crucial role in that process. I would like to cite just one example in that regard. The abortion rate in Georgia has decreased by more than 50 per cent as a result of UNFPA-supplied contraceptives over a period of 10 years. It is not just a matter of data; there is reduced maternal mortality and morbidity behind that figure.

The Georgian Government has prepared its ICPD+10 report, highlighting the achievements attained in the past 10 years and addressing a broad range of concerns related to population, reproductive health and gender equality.

While certain achievements have been made in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action, challenges still remain. Georgia's "rose revolution" has placed new developmental challenges on the agenda. The priorities of the new Government are poverty reduction, State capacity-building and the building of a democratic society. We inherited a dreadful legacy from the previous regime, especially in the social sector. Regrettably, the country's financial problems and ineffective governance are reflected the most in that field. With support from international financial institutions and donor organizations and by mobilizing our resources we expect to improve the overall situation.

In that connection, our new country programme for the period 2006-2010 is currently being prepared, in close cooperation between UNFPA and the Government of Georgia. That programme reflects all national priorities with respect to both the ICPD's goals and the Millennium Development Goals.

Non-governmental organizations and young people are reliable partners of the Government and UNFPA in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. In that regard, I would like to underline the importance of efficient coordination vis-à-vis donor support and the further effective utilization of the assistance received.

The lessons learned after 10 years of implementing the ICPD Programme of Action have shown that strategies and programmes in the coming years should be strengthened to address all emerging challenges. I would like to stress the need for continuous funding and the importance of additional resources to ensure the achievement of the ICPD's goals. In that respect, countries in transition require more financial resources to overcome hardships and to meet both the ICPD's targets and the Millennium Development Goals. Those Goals can be reached only if all countries live up to the commitment they made in Cairo to deliver the necessary resources.

We might sometimes have different opinions on particular issues, but consensus and the joining of our efforts are very much needed to achieve our main goal. Georgia reaffirms its support for the Programme of Action and stands ready to contribute to the truly revolutionary changes it aims at. We know how heavy that burden is now, but I am confident that every one of us is proud of the fact that today we are doing something that will create a better future for the generations to come. I wish the General Assembly success in its endeavours.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the General Assembly that the representative of Panama has requested to participate in this debate. Although the list of speakers was closed this morning, unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to the inscription of Panama on the list of speakers.

It was so decided.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is of singular importance for Panama to participate in this commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Although we support the statement made during this debate by the representative

of Qatar, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, we feel compelled to make a few specific remarks.

The Government of Panama reiterates its firm commitment to the principles, objectives and actions contained in the Cairo Programme of Action and the document that emerged from the Cairo+5 process, which is entitled "Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development". We are particularly committed to those elements as they relate to the inclusion of population and poverty issues in development policies, reproductive and health rights, gender equality and fairness and the empowerment of women. Panama expressed that commitment through the Santiago Declaration of the Americas, and I reaffirm it today in the Assembly on behalf of the Government of President Martin Torrijos.

The Cairo Programme of Action has been a valuable guide that has enabled us to enrich the discussion of national topics and to establish priority public policies. Our Government has developed, and is now implementing, national plans in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, equal opportunity for women and measures against domestic violence on the basis of the Programme's guidelines. Similarly, we have adopted a public policy on young people and a national policy for older adults.

I must also point out that we in Panama are firmly committed to reaching the Millennium Development Goals. We recognize that any programme designed to eradicate poverty and hunger must take into account such population variables as gender equality and sexual and reproductive health. We are therefore working to reduce maternal mortality rates in indigenous areas and to offer all Panamanian women professional birthing care and family planning services that will allow them to determine the size of their families freely and responsibly.

Lastly, the Government of President Torrijos has been attaching special importance to the issue of the health and development of Panama's adolescents and young people by creating comprehensive health, employment and education programmes that will place very high priority on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and adolescent pregnancy.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude for the commendable work done by the United Nations Population Fund under the skilful leadership of Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid. We therefore call on all countries with higher rates of economic development to increase their financial contributions in order that the Fund may continue its work for the benefit of all humankind.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Observer of the Holy See.

Rev. Msgr. Dimaculangan (Holy See): The Permanent Observer of the Holy See would have been pleased to deliver this statement himself, but a prior commitment has kept him from being here tonight.

The theme of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) emphasizes the reality that all proper concerns about human population are inextricably connected with the development and flourishing of every human being.

An important milestone at the ICPD was the linkage established between migration and development that, ever since, has prompted increased sensitivity, research, cooperation and effective policies in this field. Migration is now recognized as a major challenge for all, linked as it is to development and poverty, as well as to financial and health security. In particular, migrants are now seen as proactive agents of development. While appreciating the proper importance of these achievements, States now have to focus much more on creating jobs where people live. Political will and firm determination are needed on the part of Governments and civil society in order to foster a proper cultural, social and juridical environment capable of overcoming the persistent phenomena of discrimination, violence, human trafficking and xenophobia. Migration, now more than 10 years ago, has come to international attention because of the demographics of the developed world.

A decade ago, we were informed of United Nations studies indicating that a rapid decrease in the global rate of population growth was expected to begin during the 1990s and carry on into the new century. It is now a fact that population growth has declined appreciably in many of the industrialized developed nations and that this decline poses a serious threat to their future.

The Holy See continues to follow those matters carefully, while encouraging accurate and objective assessments of population issues and global solidarity

in regard to development strategies, especially as they affect the developing nations of the world. The Holy See is concerned that proper attention is not always given to the comprehensive set of principles, including ethical principles, essential in determining the right response to the demographic, sociological and public policy analyses of the data on population trends.

Population policy is only one part of an overall strategy for the betterment of humanity. It is essential that any discussion of population policies must simultaneously consider the actual and projected development of the human race. All development worthy of the name must be comprehensive and cannot consist in the simple accumulation of wealth or in a greater availability of goods and services, but must be pursued with due consideration for the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of every human being. Development programmes must respect the cultural heritage of peoples and nations, foster structures of participation and shared responsibility, and empower our human capacity, so that each one of us can become the person that he or she was created to be.

It would therefore be wiser if focus were placed upon the formulation of population policies that promote a responsible kind of personal liberty, instead of one that is too narrowly defined.

From this, it follows, among other things, that the duty to safeguard the family demands that special attention be given to securing, for husbands and wives, the liberty to decide responsibly, free from all social or legal coercion, on the number of children they will have and the spacing of their births. It should be the intent of Governments and other agencies to help create the social conditions that will enable couples themselves to make appropriate decisions in the light of their responsibilities. We know that responsible parenthood is not a question of unlimited procreation or lack of awareness of what is involved in rearing children, but also involves the right of parents to use their liberty wisely. That is why, along these lines, couples that choose to have large families also deserve to be supported.

The seriousness of the challenges that Governments and, above all, parents must face in the education of the younger generation means that we cannot abdicate our responsibility to lead young people to a deeper understanding of their own dignity and potentiality as persons. It remains our task to challenge them with a demanding ethic that fully respects their dignity and that leads them to the wisdom that is needed in order to face the many demands of life.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/29 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the Observer for Partners in Population and Development.

Mr. Singh (Partners in Population and Development): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to make a few brief comments on behalf of the Partners in Population and Development. The Partners in Population and Development is an intergovernmental alliance of 26 developing countries dedicated to the promotion of South-South cooperation on population and development.

Having heard the statements that were delivered today, we note quite a few accomplishments during the 10 years that have passed since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). We are pleased that during these 10 years the broad concept of reproductive health has been incorporated by an increasing number of Governments in their primary health care management, delivery and outreach programmes.

However, more than 120 million couples still lack access to reproductive health commodities and services and commodity security remains an urgent issue, particularly in poor countries in Africa and other parts of the world. HIV/AIDS rages now as a pandemic, and although almost $5 billion are being provided annually by donors for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, this amount is less than half of the amount needed.

Also, the parallel functioning of family planning and HIV/AIDS programmes in many countries has not always been very effective in ensuring that commodities and services are delivered to all those who need them most. Although gains have been made in reducing infant and child mortality, maternal mortality in global terms remains, sadly, at the same level as 10 years ago and has grown even worse in war-ravaged countries. Education, particularly for girls, has not yet been fully achieved, and while progress has been made towards reducing the incidence of female genital mutilation and more public attention is being given to domestic violence against women, the empowerment of women remains a distant goal in

many areas of economic and social development. Adolescents and youth also need much greater attention than has been given to them so far.

So, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of ICPD, as most speakers have said, we need to rededicate ourselves to the earliest possible achievement of the goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action and to find ways and means to resolve the problems and difficulties encountered in reaching those goals and objectives, within the overall framework of the MDGs.

In that context, in cooperation with the Government of China, my organization organized a major meeting in Wuhan, China, only a few weeks ago. The results of that meeting have already been summarized by the representative of China in his presentation. I will not repeat his words, but I want to point out that the declaration adopted by that meeting reaffirms the commitment of the participants to the ICPD Programme of Action as one of the major, strategic directions for attaining the MDGs. Thus, the link between the ICPD goals and the MDGs were fully emphasized. The declaration further calls upon Governments and international agencies to take all possible steps to more fully integrate sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programmes — particularly those targeting measures to prevent the further spread of HIV infections — into their development plans.

The World Leaders Statement, signed by over 250 leaders and presented yesterday to the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, will certainly help to refocus world attention on the importance and urgency of population and development issues.

At the same time, it is necessary to note that it is primarily at the country level that Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must clarify and strengthen the linkages between the attainment of the ICPD goals and the Millennium Goals. The reports provided by countries on the implementation of the MDGs must also indicate how they see those linkages and how they implement them. For example, the country report on the implementation of the MDGs in China, prepared by the United Nations country team, clearly incorporates reproductive health indicators. I hope similar reports will be submitted by other countries. That will strengthen the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization and other international organizations to give adequate attention to reproductive health and population issues, in the preparations for the five-year review conference on the Millennium Development Goals.

Adequate resource mobilization, at both the domestic and the international levels, is essential to the achievement of the ICPD goals, in the context of the Millennium Goals. Reports indicate that the efforts undertaken by donors to reach the ICPD cost estimates for the years 2000 and 2005 are nowhere near the mark. Without a much greater mobilization of additional resources, there will be very little prospect of fully realizing the ICPD goals, particularly those relating to the provision of family planning and reproductive health services.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing the importance of South-South collaboration as providing a cost-effective and efficient modality for the promotion and implementation of ICPD goals. Several of the previous speakers talked about this, but I just want to draw attention to this approach that will help developing countries to help themselves by providing training, exchange of information, research possibilities and commodity security — of course, while continuing to raise resources from other sources.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/4 of 16 October 1992, I now give the floor to the Observer for the International Organization for Migration.

Mr. Dall'Oglio (International Organization for Migration): In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, the international community sought for the first time to develop a comprehensive blueprint for managing migration. Chapter X of the ICPD Programme of Action mapped out a series of policy directions covering, inter alia, the development of orderly migration programmes, the prevention of trafficking in migrants, the reduction of irregular and undocumented migration, better protection for internally displaced persons and refugees, the promotion of the development potential of migration and the need for cooperation between countries in successfully and comprehensively managing migration.

Much progress has been made since Cairo to translate this agenda into action, in what has become an extremely dynamic migration environment. In the

interim, in fact, the number of international migrants worldwide has increased by some 50 million, their yearly remittances sent back home have multiplied to over $100 billion and the average annual flow of migrants from less developed countries to more developed regions has doubled. In that rapidly changing migration landscape, new social and institutional actors have emerged, adding fresh perspectives and original viewpoints. A growing and more articulated diaspora has come forward in countries of immigration, representing a new constituency, voicing their concerns and, at times, challenging the status quo both in their host societies and in countries of origin alike.

In sum, while many of the objectives set forth a decade ago in Cairo remain the goals of today, our collective appreciation for their relevance and complexity has increased and sharpened, along with a prevailing recognition that migration is an essential, inevitable and potentially beneficial component of the economic and social life of every State and every region. Far from being a fatalistic approach to global demographic trends, that realization has stimulated a call for policy developments to channel migration into safe, humane, socially cohesive and productive avenues that benefit both individuals and societies.

Indeed, one of the most significant indicators of progress since Cairo has been the development of regional consultative frameworks to discuss migration issues in a cooperative manner on every continent. Those processes are now a firmly established feature of the international migration scene — a multiplicity of consultative circles, both large and small, with broad or sectoral agendas, in accordance with regional priorities.

Turning from the regional to the global level, new initiatives have also similarly evolved to foster multilateral dialogue and cooperation, among others: the Berne Initiative, a consultative, intergovernmental process intended to develop a non-binding policy framework for the management of migration; the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) own International Dialogue on Migration, which brings together more than 130 States and additional partners in the IOM Council to create better understanding and cooperation in the management of migration; and the recently set up Global Commission on International Migration, which next year is to present its recommendations on concrete modalities to further global migration governance to the Secretary-General and other concerned stakeholders. The high-level dialogue scheduled for the sixtieth session of the General Assembly in 2006 will provide an additional important avenue for concerted action.

Admittedly, for many countries, migration is a new administrative field. Migration systems to track, process and ease inward and outward movements of people, as well as to facilitate their residence and integration, are still weak in many countries. Limited capacities affect both developing and developed countries and pose significant challenges to effective policy formulation and implementation. Often, the linkages among public administration disciplines such as trade, health, development cooperation, labour and home affairs have been weak or incoherent.

For those on the move or those planning to migrate, the delays and inconsistencies in migration systems may well put their lives at risk, as they consign themselves to the hands of smugglers in attempts to gain entry through irregular channels. For the millions living in fear of public institutions because of their undocumented status, social marginalization, segregation and alienation have become a fact of life. For that reason, the development of national capacities to manage migratory flows remains as relevant and pressing as it was 10 years ago in Cairo.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 45.

The meeting rose at 9.05 p.m.